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Mardi
24 octobre 2017

Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 October 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 octobre 2017

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I didn't realize we couldn't do introductions, but somebody we haven't seen in this place for a long time, my son, has joined us today: Nigel Flynn. Please welcome him to the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRENGTHENING QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PATIENTS ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 RENFORÇANT LA QUALITÉ ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ POUR LES PATIENTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 18, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 160, An Act to amend, repeal and enact various Acts in the interest of strengthening quality and accountability for patients / *Projet de loi 160, Loi visant à modifier, à abroger et à édicter diverses lois dans le souci de renforcer la qualité et la responsabilité pour les patients.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I see I only have 10 minutes. We're going to have to speak quickly.

It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 160—what do we call it? I've got it right here—An Act to amend, repeal and enact various Acts in the interest of strengthening quality and accountability for patients.

It's always interesting that, somehow, this government, as we near that judgment day of June 7, 2018, they're working the word "accountability" into just about every bill that they introduce in this House. Every time a minister speaks or a backbencher is asking a fluff question of a minister, they try to somehow work the word "accountability" in there. It's precisely because this government has talked the talk on accountability for 14 years but has done little in the way of actual action to

make Ontarians feel that they're more accountable. In fact, most of the things that they have done recently would indicate that they are not accountable.

I just did a rough count here. This bill amends over 40 acts. Even by the most generous of standards, someone would have to say that is what we would call an omnibus bill. We seem to get hit with these omnibus bills as we near an election, because the government is trying to do a whole lot of housecleaning and a whole lot of house-keeping before, as I said, judgment day.

There is a movie, I think, called Judgment Day. Maybe we'll make one about the Ontario Legislature and the Ontario election, and we'll call it Judgment Day. I'd love to have it phrased or referred to as that, because that's what elections are. They are a judgment on the current government and what they have done in their term of office.

This bill, as I said, brings forth so many changes. Here's the one thing I'm concerned about: In my time here, which is also 14 years—ironically, I was elected at the time that this government took office.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank God you were.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, I was glad I was elected, but I would have liked to have seen a whole lot more of my colleagues elected at that time. But we're not here to talk politics, Speaker, of course, as you know.

What I learned is just how many regulations we have in this province of Ontario, and this bill introduces so many more. I think there's a genuine desire on the part of the Minister of Health to try to make our system work better. I think we all want that. We all want our health system to be the most efficient, effective and reliable that it possibly can be.

Here is my concern. Since I got here, I realized that we're supposed to be talking about the client. We're supposed to be talking about the patient or the resident or the client, whatever the case may be. Whether it's a patient in a hospital, whether it's a resident in a long-term-care home or retirement home, or whether it's a client, we might refer to them as in the home care system.

I see that the Speaker has changed. The gentleman in the Speaker's chair has also been a community safety critic, so he knows what regulations have done, for example, to rank-and-file police officers. The current community safety critic, my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock—they know what regulations have done to the work that our police officers and our first responders do.

Our long-term-care workers—we'll just use that as an example—and I recognize that my colleague from Nickel

Belt reintroduced private member's legislation about hours of care and minimum hours of care for our folks in long-term-care homes. But here's the rub: When we keep passing more and more regulations and saying, "We're going to be watching you about this, and we're going to be watching you about that, and you're going to get fined if you don't do this, and you're going to get fined if you do that"—when do our front-line workers have time to look after the patient, the resident, the client? Or in the case of first responders and police officers, how do they have time to actually be on the streets protecting us and fighting crime when they're sitting at their desks filling out every possible form you can think of?

I understand that we need checks and balances. We all want checks and balances. But in our society, we've become so fixated on the paperwork that we forget the work—paperwork over work. And the work that our first responders, our professionals, our health care workers do is the most important part of their job, their vocation, their career, their passion. It's what they deliver to the people.

A friend of mine, Dr. Vaughan Glover, a dentist from Arnprior, wrote a book called *Journey to Wellness*. Can I show this? Apparently, I can't show this. The Speaker is shaking his head that I can't. Vaughan Glover wrote a book called *Journey to Wellness* about patient-centred health care. I gave a copy of that book to then-Premier Dalton McGuinty and the health minister at the time, George Smitherman. Here's what we're talking about: We are in a health care system that is currently swallowing itself. It is so big, it is such a behemoth, that it is swallowing itself in its administration and in its own bureaucracy, and we are failing to allow the people on the ground to get the care to the patient, to the client, to the resident that is so absolutely needed and necessary.

It is important to be able to have checks and balances. It is important for everyone to be accountable. It is important that for those who fall outside the rules, there is a mechanism to penalize them, so that they do—because that's about patient and client and resident protection as well. But we have to ask ourselves sometimes: Have we become so bureaucratically-centric that the most important thing we do is pass a whole lot of regulations, where it's yet to be shown that any one of them lead to better care for the people who we're supposed to be identifying at the top of the pyramid, at the top of the food chain, at the top of our list of priorities? That's what we need to do with our patients and our health care system.

0910

What is the saying that we all knew as children? The road to hell is paved with good intentions. I'm not questioning the intent of the minister here. I think his intentions are honourable and pointed in the right direction. The problem is how we write legislation and how we bring in bureaucracy, rules and regulations. We think rules and regulations are going to solve all the problems of the world. We just need two: We need to make sure that the patient is the centre of our health care system;

and we need to realize that the fix in our health care system is to ensure that the people on the front line have the tools they require and the resources necessary, and to create the environment that allows those two things together to flourish, so that our patients are indeed given the best health care possible here in the province of Ontario.

We all want that, but we must remember that we cannot regulate better health care. We cannot force more legislation. Legislation doesn't change anything. What we need to do is have a system where the people on the front line recognize that it is their commitment, their passion and their compassion that, indeed, make the best health care system we can have. The people we have are the ones we need to make sure are bringing that health care to the people of Ontario, so that we can all live in what we believe to be the best place in the world to live, work, raise a family and prosper. This is Ontario. We've got to make sure that the front-line people in our health care system—and our administrators, from the minister on down—are the ones that recognize that the patient comes first. Let our front-line people deliver that care to the patient.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm always interested in the words of our colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I agree with his assessment of the overall status of our health care system. I believe it is top-heavy on the bureaucratic side. We've seen that with the imposition of the local health integration networks, which don't necessarily focus on the local part and don't certainly put emphasis on the health part. More often, you see them talking about integration and amalgamation of services to look for potential savings. What that does is it compromises services on the back end, whether you're talking about health care providers or service providers in our communities. They are forced, after these integration proposals and integration experiments, to do less with more. That, again, creates a strain on our community and a strain on the health care system in general.

It has often been said that you can't fix a problem by just simply throwing money at it. You can't do that. That's just a general consensus that everybody says. But in fact, when it comes to health care, putting money into it and investing is exactly the way you can fix the problem around health care. I heard the member talk about having the adequate resources. What that means is the adequate revenue, the adequate money. Let's be plain and simple here and talk about funding our health care system. We've seen drastic cuts over the 14 years that this government has been in power: cuts to hospitals; frozen budgets; nurses being fired; beds being closed. That's what we're talking about.

Let's get down to brass tacks here. Where are you going to find the money and how much are you going to invest in those front-line services? New Democrats have always been prepared to invest so that people get the best care they deserve and need in our communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I recognize the Minister of Seniors Affairs.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Chair. Good morning. I'm delighted to rise here and speak yet again to the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act.

I was just listening to the members opposite speak, and I agree that to improve a system you need to add monetary resources, but you also need to sometimes add legislative resources or enforcement resources. Those kinds of tools are really important. They're not mutually exclusive from one another. So I was kind of surprised to hear them suggest that somehow, just because this omnibus legislation adds a number of tools to the health care system to ensure patient and resident safety—that is not exclusive to adding resources in other places. In fact, I can tell you that in Mississauga, we are adding 350 beds to the local hospital. So absolutely, we are doing both. We are giving our health care partners the legislative and enforcement tools that they need to improve patient safety in long-term-care homes and resident safety in retirement homes.

At the same time, as a government, we are investing in resources. You heard the Minister of Health yesterday in question period talk about a number of hospitals across Ontario that are getting new beds and new resources. I can speak to my own riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville. We are going to benefit from about 500 new beds: 350 in Mississauga and about 150 in neighbouring Etobicoke, which is used by people who live in Mississauga.

I do want to say that one of the things that I like about this bill is that there are a lot of common-sense pieces. That's something that the PC Party, I would have thought, appreciated: the fact that we have all of these common-sense pieces. One example is giving our paramedics the discretion to say, "This person doesn't need to go to the emergency department after all." To me, that's just a common-sense move. So I really support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I recognize the member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Oh, thank you very much, Speaker. I do apologize. On this side of the caucus, we decided that I was getting the hit. On that side of the caucus, I guess they decided you were getting the hit. So I do apologize; I jumped up without noticing.

It's always a pleasure to be able to rise in the debate to talk about health care in the province of Ontario. Obviously, it was—

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You are eating into my time, people.

It's always, obviously, good to engage in debate with my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. He made some very valid points about the clients that we

have and the customers, if you will, in our health care system. They do expect more.

You will recall, Speaker, that when this government came to office, they brought in the single largest income tax increase in Ontario's history by bringing in the health tax. Of course, the health tax really never went to health care. It went into roads, sewers and general revenue, so it didn't do very much to improve health care in the province of Ontario. Agreed, most of us will say we've made great strides, but of course technology advances and those types of things are very important.

What I will go back to, when I look at the name of this bill—the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act—this is not the first time myself or the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has seen an accountability piece of legislation aimed at health care in the province of Ontario as a result of things like eHealth, Ornge and some other scandals at Cancer Care Ontario. It is rich for the government to put forward this accountability for patients act, given that we've seen this movie many times before. It seems to be a rerun.

They appointed a Patient Ombudsman. They didn't make that individual an independent officer of the assembly like so many other advocates that we have. I think that that speaks to some of the failings of this current government as well.

Certainly, we do acknowledge that we need to ensure that we do have timely, accessible health care in the province of Ontario, and that the money that we send here from Queen's Park through our constituents gets to them.

Thank you very much and also to the member from Leeds—Grenville—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Further questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: As always, it's a great privilege to stand on behalf of the good people of Algoma—Manitoulin.

The member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke just brought up a couple of points that I'm wholeheartedly in full agreement with: Patients come first, and our focus should be on delivering that care appropriately to those individuals when they need it.

My colleague from Essex really hit it right on: This issue needs to have money put into it in order to provide that care that we need, but that money needs to flow at the right place for the right individuals. A lot of the money that we see going into our health care system, due to the opening up of privatization further—and this bill does open it up for further privatization—leads to bureaucrats, leads to boards, leads to profits that will not get to the front-line workers who are actually the people who are delivering that work, who are delivering that care and who need the investment into what they do each and every day caring for our loved ones.

0920

When you look at this, there are a lot of components that are within this bill and there are way too many schedules in here—some good, some bad. But this is a

common theme that we get from this Liberal government: Here are a couple of nuggets but there's a poison pill in here.

What we're seeing in here—particularly, one that really stands out to me is under schedule 10, where we're actually opening up the door to self-governance and self-oversight, taking it away from our agencies, our government, our people to really look into what's happening out there. What does that do? That puts the patient in the home, in care, at risk. That's a huge concern that I have with this particular piece of legislation.

I'm going to end there but I'm looking forward to having my opportunity to speak to this bill. There are a lot of people who are really concerned, or have potential to be concerned, for what's going to happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for final comments.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the members from Essex, Nepean–Carleton and Algoma–Manitoulin, and also the Minister of Seniors Affairs.

The minister herself actually called it an omnibus bill, which speaks to one of the challenges that we have as opposition in dealing with pieces of legislation that amend so many acts simultaneously, making it very difficult to make a decision on whether or not you support it. There are components of the bill you like; there are components of the bill you don't like. At the end of the day, regardless of how you vote on it, it isn't really a true picture of how you see every component of the bill. We have too many bills like that these days.

They all referred to them as “clients” and my colleague from Nepean–Carleton actually used the word “customers.” You know why you might want forgiveness for calling anybody a customer in the health care system. If looked at in the proper way, that's exactly what we all are. If you're a business person in this country or anywhere in the world, you ascribe to the creed that the customer comes first. If we accept that as government when we're delivering government services through our bureaucracy or through the political side of government, if we take that mantra that the customer comes first, we'll all do a better job of delivering whatever service it may be.

I encourage everyone in this House, and particularly the members on the government side—I'm sorry; I've got the book up again. I guess I'm not supposed to do that—the book, *Journey to Wellness* by Dr. Vaughan Glover from Arnprior, which talks about designing a people-centred health care system. If we keep that in mind and put the people, the patient, the client, the resident and, yes, the customer at the top of that priority list, we'll do better in the end than what we've been doing for some time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am also glad to be able to stand and make some remarks on behalf of my constituents in Oshawa on what is an immensely important topic.

This is a very involving conversation about strengthening quality and accountability for patients, as this Bill 160 is so beautifully named. If only. If only this bill indeed strengthened quality and accountability for patients.

I start a lot of my talks in here with the same thing: pointing out how lovely the titles are. But, again, this is another bill that is wanting—coulda, shoulda, woulda. This is a bill that has 10 schedules in it but it isn't addressing the heart of this, and that is about providing predictable, better, hands-on care and strengthening our health care system for Ontarians.

I called my constituency office yesterday and said, “Is there anything new that has come in in the last couple of days? I'd like to be able to share in the Legislature.” It's the same conversation we always have. It's folks who might feel they have been pushed out of hospitals too early. It is cases of still inadequate post-stroke care. That has come up a few times in the last few weeks, despite the changes that have been made.

This is one: We have a 71-year-old requiring spinal fusion surgery, if you can imagine, that was diagnosed back in July 2015, and there's still no date booked for the surgery. Spinal fusion surgery: I don't know exactly what that entails, but I hope I don't ever have to go through that. But the quality of life would be seriously impacted by that condition—and that was just off the top of the head of one of my constituency assistants. I have letters here that I'll be sharing.

But it comes down to the same: This is a bill that has 10 schedules, that is an omnibus bill, and it doesn't get to the heart of it. This government isn't willing, again, to do the work to make the changes when it comes to long-term care, when it comes to our hospitals, when it comes to appropriate access to health care services, when it comes to pharmacare—like I said, coulda, shoulda, woulda.

Anyway, we'll help them out with that, though, because we will all be looking forward to committee. At committee, I really hope that this majority government will listen to the folks that we're hearing from, that we will hear from the front lines, that we will hear from caregivers and health care providers and that they will listen to the patients, because they don't seem to. If they did, it would be reflected in this piece of legislation, I think.

But also, as we heard earlier, the Patient Ombudsman, or patient ombudsperson—even her office has called for the ability to be independent and to have the kind of oversight that would be required to make a difference. Again, I won't call it a token position, but it could have been what we need in Ontario, which is that independent layer of oversight. I hope that they listen to her at committee as well, because I know she has been connecting with folks in my community and, I'm sure, others.

For years, we have seen this Wynne government, we've seen the Conservatives chipping away at medicare and letting people down when they need it the most—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Easy with the Conservatives.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I saw the Conservative member over there. I think he was giving me a high-five; I'm not sure. But if he's wanting me to further clarify, I'm happy to do that.

More than 1,600 registered nurse positions have been eliminated inside Ontario hospitals since the start of 2015. The last time that the Conservatives were in office, Speaker, I'm happy to remind you, they cut 6,000 nurses, closed 28 hospitals and shut down over 7,000 hospital beds.

If we're going to talk about cuts, as my colleagues in the other parties appreciate cuts so much, cuts aren't just numbers. Cuts aren't numbers on a balance sheet. They're people; they're families. When we cut beds, it means that people get treatment, if they get it at all, in the hallways. If we don't have the mental health beds and services, it means that people are in our streets and our nooks and our crannies, and we know what that looks like in our communities. I was talking to some of our police members of the community, and they deal with it on a regular basis. When we are not supporting our mental health system and our health system in general, then we are expecting our public services, our police, our partners in the community, like the John Howard Society, to address the issues. Again, we have an omnibus bill here that could have put more focus on these issues, and it doesn't.

We need to be seeing minimum standards of care. This is a bill that opens the door to privatization. No, Speaker, that is the wrong direction to go. When we look at our hospital system—and out in Durham, there are lots of talks about mergers and amalgamating and all of that, and we see such pushback from the community, because all of these plans happen without doing the math on where the growth is and what the need is. When you're going to take services out of hospitals—strategically or just let it happen—and pull those services out and place them in little specialized clinics here and there, not only do people not have the access that they need and the health care that they deserve at the hospitals, but then they have the further burden of having to pay for the travel to get from A to B to C to D.

Up in Peterborough, when my grandmother was living there and having to go from one place to another for different appointments, she was, at 90—I guess then she would have been 94 or 95—fully capable of making the appointments and then had to take a taxi and pay for that herself, all across the community, to get to her necessary appointments instead of going to one hospital, the way that it used to be.

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Folks who have a hospital near them go there, expecting that they have access to services. Oh, no, just kidding. You've now got to go maybe to Bowmanville or wherever. People don't understand that this building right here, that is supposed to be about health care, is actually just one point on their health care map, and they're going to have to navigate all over, at a cost to themselves. Hopefully, they have the money for transit.

Again, here we are planning our health care—I say “planning.” That was really generous of me. We are creating a health care system without doing the planning and looking at where people are living, where the growth is and how they can travel. It's not keeping up with our bus system and all that. But, Speaker, that's another conversation I'll move over here, for another day.

I'd like to talk about long-term care.

I have folks in my office on a constant basis with long-term-care needs. They are concerned about their loved ones, their parents, their spouses who are not able to get the care that they deserve.

I've had folks who are PSWs, working in our long-term-care system, in tears in my office, saying, “I went into this 10, 15, 20 years ago because I care, and now I have to let my residents sit in their own waste, waiting for care, because there aren't enough staff on the floor to attend to them.” They are forcing people into incontinence who otherwise could use the facilities with help, but because there might only be two people on the floor to lift someone down the hall—“Sorry, you're just going to have to wait.” That's just one indignity that happens on a regular basis.

I had a woman in my office who put cameras in, who did all sorts of things, who was trying to work with the home to make adjustments, to accommodate her mother's specific needs, and they just couldn't. They couldn't meet those needs. Her mother has since passed under terrible circumstances.

This is a government that has said over and over that they are not willing to expand the scope of the inquiry into long-term care. We need to. We need to look at the whole system and say what is right, what is wrong, what is working, where we need to invest and where we need to shift resources.

Actually, Speaker, were you here that day? Never mind. Maybe you were here that day. We voted. It was a weird day. You might recall that the opposition parties won the day. Well, the NDP won the day, really. There were three NDP bills and motions on the table. Am I allowed to say there weren't enough Liberals to form the majority? I don't remember who was and who wasn't here, but they weren't the majority that day. We won. We had those three bills and motions passed.

One of them was the motion to expand the scope of the long-term-care inquiry. Even some of their members voted for it, because it was a free vote. Again, it was a magical day. But then they acted like it didn't happen. “Oh, well, the will of the House—who cares? We're still not expanding it. We're the government. We're the majority. Nah-nah, nah-nah-nah.”

It's so frustrating that the people of Ontario want care, want access to care, and this government says, “Meh. Nope.” In fact, it's worse than that: They are putting forward a bill that is potentially doing damage, that is making it easier for the government to privatize hospital services, which is wrong.

We are concerned about the crisis in seniors' care; they are not. Another day, Speaker, I'd love to tell you all about universal pharmacare, but I'm out of time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Granville Anderson: I wish to thank the member from Oshawa for her comments on the matter.

I'm going to speak a little bit about long-term-care homes. Yes, there are 78,000 residents in Ontario who are in long-term-care homes. That's going to increase—we all know that—as the population ages.

There are pressures to remedy the situation. This government has taken steps to remedy that situation. The opposition parties opposed every effort we have made to improve that.

I know it's not enough; it might not be enough to begin with, but it's a start. You should applaud the work this government is doing around long-term-care homes.

There is a lot more work to be done, Speaker. We know that. We are aware of that, and we are trying to address that as a government.

I have had residents come into my office as well. They complain; they talk about the long-term care and some positive, some negative effects of that. But that's something that's improving and that's something that we need to improve to make our most vulnerable citizens have the comfort and the quality of life they need and they deserve. That's what we strive to do as a government and that's what we are working hard to get accomplished. It's not an easy task. It's a task that requires a lot of funding and, in some cases, more modernized homes and more staff, which we are trying to address. We know there's a problem with long-term-care homes.

My mom didn't want to go into a home a couple of years ago. She had home care. The quality of home care was to be commended. We had PSWs coming in and nurses coming in. Not everyone can stay at home, but we are also emphasizing home care as well, as a remedy to this situation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to use my short time this morning in debate for Bill 160, the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act, to talk about a letter that I wrote last week to Minister Hoskins about one of my constituents, Barbara Woodman. Ms. Woodman asked me to write to the Minister because she wants access to a drug called Uptravi. Ms. Woodman wants to slow down the progression of pulmonary arterial hypertension—or PAH—which she suffers as a complication of her systemic scleroderma. Despite the support and medical evidence that has been provided by her doctors, regrettably the ministry has denied her request.

I wrote on a compassionate basis to the minister. This is a drug that has been approved by Health Canada for, I think, over 18 months. It's a drug that her doctors feel would be of benefit to her. This disease is taking a tremendous toll on herself and her family.

I think we need to take a step back sometimes, when we're debating these bills, to get some of the comments from our constituents on the record and the fact that we need to do a better job. We need to have a system that is

more compassionate so that when a drug like Uptravi has been given approval by Health Canada, our process to have our constituents have access to this should be looked at.

She deserves every opportunity to stay at home. I'm pleased to advocate for Ms. Woodman today. But I really do believe that when we talk about strengthening quality and to try to strengthen accountability for patients, access to these drugs is critical. So I want the ministry to take this into consideration.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to follow my colleague from Oshawa and add some comments to her debate.

I want to start with what the Liberal member from Durham said, where he recognized that there is more money that needs to go into our health care system. But I have to point out that it has actually been his Liberal government, for the last 14 years, that has cut funding and frozen budgets to our health care system.

I also want to point out that it is their increased drive to privatize everything in this province if they have an opportunity—but it's their drive to privatize our health care system that is causing a crisis in health care. You only have to look at what happened in my city, in Windsor, with the Medical Laboratories of Windsor, where workers were on strike for three weeks, trying to get a living wage.

I have to point out that this is a privately run lab that receives public dollars. The Ministry of Health gives them money to do medical testing. Yet they have workers who weren't even making a living wage. You have other privatized labs that were paying their workers better. You have those who are doing the exact same work in a hospital—another publicly funded institution—who are making double what these workers were making.

Yet we have, in this bill, a drive to further privatize our health care system, to turn over the care of patients to private labs, who will—bottom line—try to make money for those who own the lab. The result of that is that they are not paying their workers a fair or equitable wage, let alone a living wage. Their goal is to make sure that, at the end of the day, the owners or the shareholders in that company are making as much money as they possibly can.

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The member from Durham is right: The health care system needs more money; we don't need more money going into private hands.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm pleased to rise and make a few comments in regard to the remarks from the member for Oshawa.

I think we all agree in this House that there is more to do when it comes to ensuring that our loved ones in long-term-care facilities receive the appropriate type of care that they need and that they deserve. Of course, this is

exactly what this bill is doing. It would guarantee that all long-term-care-home operators are providing safe and quality care for residents through a stronger inspection program with more robust enforcement tools, including some really quite dramatic financial penalties and new provincial offences.

Of course, we do know that the vast majority of long-term-care homes are in compliance with provincial rules and regulations, but those who do have recurring issues will not be tolerated. These new enforcement tools, I'd like to remind the member, would ensure long-term-care-home operators with recurring care and safety concerns need to urgently address these issues.

We are increasing fines so that the maximum fines for all offence provisions under the Long-Term Care Homes Act will be raised to \$100,000 for first-time offences and \$200,000 for subsequent offences. For the corporations involved, the fines will be up to \$200,000 for a first-time offence and \$500,000 for subsequent offences.

We're also going to be establishing new offences that will directly address some of the concerns of the member from Oshawa, new offences that would provide additional protections for residents: failure to protect residents from abuse and neglect; and failure to comply with an order.

This is good legislation. It's certainly a step in the right direction. I urge everyone in this House to support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Oshawa for final comments.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I appreciate the comments from around the room. I'm glad to hear the members on the other side talk about home care, recognize the need to do more and recognize the need to put in more money. I'm back to "if only."

Anyway, to hear the Minister of Community and Social Services read me this section of the bill about increasing fines or giving this more teeth—there's an old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The thing is, we're not talking about something obscure; we're talking about people. We need to invest on the prevention side, not just go get them after the fact. We need to look at the entire system.

I had been asked months ago to comment on issues in Ottawa. I'm now being asked to comment on them locally about long-term-care homes putting up all these walls and stops against advocating families and trespass orders and things like that, and the government's sort of, "Oh well, do what you got to do." That's not appropriate. We need all eyes on the situation to ensure that everyone is safe and cared for.

We see overcrowding, underfunding and undermining by this government of our health care system, of our long-term-care system. We need to be expanding the scope. We need to actually be talking about quality and accountability, not more layers of bureaucracy and more in admin. We need to be talking about front-line care. We need to be talking about health.

I appreciated the comments from the member from Windsor West about privatization, and what it looks like

when public dollars are going into private spaces and we see ballooning profit margins instead of improving health outcomes. That is fundamentally problematic.

The member from Leeds–Grenville reminded us that we need a more compassionate system and talked about advocating for individual patients. I have folks who write letters about their unbelievably long wait-list. We hear from folks all the time. We need to remember this is about them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm proud to be able to stand up and speak to the issue of health care here in the Legislature.

As you've all heard me say many times before, health care is an issue that obviously touches every single one of our constituencies, but it's one that occupies a great share of my time because we have one of the largest populations of seniors in the province. When I have my monthly seniors' advisory group meetings in my community, in Etobicoke Centre, I hear about the issues, the opportunities, around health care every day.

Speaker, before I go on, I just wanted to indicate that I'll be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Health care is important in Etobicoke Centre. It's important across the province. This bill has been developed in an attempt to make our health care system better.

When you listen to the members opposite, it's really difficult to follow what's happening on the other side of the Legislature. When I walked into the Legislature this morning around 9 o'clock, I heard members complaining that the bill is too big—they're complaining that we're doing too much to improve the health care system, apparently—that it's an omnibus bill. I like to call it an omni-results bill. We're here to get stuff done for people, and that's what we're doing.

It's funny; I remember debating a bill not so long ago here when the members of the opposition, the PCs and the NDP, were complaining that the bill wasn't doing enough, that the bill was too light, that there wasn't enough in that particular piece of legislation. Now they're complaining that there's too much in this piece of legislation. I really wonder what the opposition is thinking. Do they want us to get results, or do they not want us to get results? I would ask the members of the opposition, when they get up, to indicate whether they want us to help improve the health care system or not, because it's not clear, based on the debate that I've just watched, whether they are actually serious about improving health care or just serious about obfuscating. It appears to me that they're obfuscating.

The other thing, Speaker, when you listen to the members opposite, is you hear a lot about—this morning I heard some members say we're cutting health care. I would urge the members of the opposition to get a briefing, to open the budget. There's a lot of information out there, where they would discover that we're not cutting

health care. In fact, health care is the largest component of the provincial budget. We spend about \$52 billion a year, so it's our single largest expenditure and it's one of the fastest-growing. So for the members opposite to walk in here and try to suggest to the people watching at home that somehow health care is being cut—it's hard to imagine something further from the truth.

So I urge the members opposite to get a briefing, maybe read the budget, maybe just google "health care budget Ontario." They'll discover that the health care budget is actually growing quite rapidly. It's not that hard. I think the members opposite need to make that effort before they stand up here and say these things, because the people of Ontario may not realize that what they're saying is not accurate.

The last thing, Speaker, I want to talk about is the quality of health care, which is what this bill is about.

Yesterday morning, I had the opportunity to visit Etobicoke General Hospital. I have a riding that's served by four LHINs, so many hospitals serve my community, but Etobicoke General Hospital is probably the one that people rely on the most. It was really exciting for me. I had the opportunity to meet the new president of the hospital. He and his team gave me a tour of the construction that's being undertaken at Etobicoke General: a new emergency department, a new intensive care, maternal birthing units, dialysis centres. This is really exciting for our community in Etobicoke and the communities beyond that get served by this hospital.

The reason I raise this, Speaker, is because this is just one example of the kinds of investments that the government has been making over the course of years to improve health care in our province—not just in terms of funding home care or long-term care or those other services that people rely on every day, but in terms of building the infrastructure to support that care.

When you look at the record of the parties opposite and how they closed hospitals, how they cut services—for them to now stand up and complain that we have an omni-results bill that's doing far more than they ever did in their time in office is really disappointing.

So I'd point the members opposite to a tool called Google, and I suggest that they look up "health care budget." They'll discover the facts. The facts matter, and they should use them here before they speak to the people of Ontario, before they lead them astray.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing with debate, I recognize the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I definitely want to acknowledge the contribution by my colleague from Etobicoke Centre, an absolutely great member in his first term who certainly does have the pulse of his community and actually works at the issues that we're discussing here.

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Over the summer, while I was on a conference in the United States, one of the opportunities I had was to meet a couple of the local people in the Midwest. One of the things that they asked me was, "Can we see your health

care card from Canada?"—or as they said, "Kin-ada." So I showed them my OHIP card. They said, "Let us understand here: There are no deductibles." I said, "No." They said, "There is no screening out for pre-existing conditions." I said, "No." They said, "There are no lifetime spending limits or no term limits on this?" I said, "No." They said, "Ah, that's what we need to have here."

So there are a number of things that this bill does; it's a big bill because it does a lot of things. It delivers results in a manner which my colleague from Etobicoke Centre encapsulated very accurately with his expression "an omni-results bill."

There are a couple of things that I wanted to talk about. One of them is transparency. I have a lot of friends who are doctors and they are great people. They are hard-working and they are effective, and they live very well on top of that. Part of what's in this bill says that the legislation, if passed, would make payments from the medical industry to health care professionals and organizations available to the public. This is something that's done in other jurisdictions and it's done very well. For example, Ontario wouldn't be breaking a lot of ground here. France, the United States, Belgium, Denmark, Portugal and Slovakia have all addressed this issue through legislation. So there is, in fact, a template to work on. What this essentially says is that as residents of Ontario, we deserve some openness and accountability.

One of the things that this bill does is work to make that openness and accountability happen and make it happen quickly. It would require the medical industry to annually report payments that are submitted to health care organizations and to individual professionals, which would include such things as paid meals, travel, research grants and fees for services such as consultation or sponsored speaking engagements. None of these things are wrong. All of them should be aboveboard and they should be seen to be above board. But what we want to know is: How much?

If passed, this new legislation would allow for the payment information to be publicly posted on a database. What this would do for the people of Ontario is measure the extent of medical industry transfers of value to health care.

The bill does something that, as a former swimmer, I think is an excellent idea. Within it are proposed changes that would affect recreational water settings that are not currently regulated under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. These amendments must be made to coincide with some advances in technology and also with business operations. So it would, for example, allow public health inspectors to follow best practices and to inspect recreational water settings such as splash pads and wading pools at least once a year, again, based on good practices. At the moment, unlike personal services businesses, there is no requirement for operators to actually comply with almost anything.

If you're watching television, people will show you that there is a connection between hepatitis A and/or hepatitis C and what you could pick up if you're swim-

ming in water that hasn't been properly treated. I think these proposed changes will allow inspectors to gradually escalate actions against non-compliant businesses by allowing inspectors to enforce these regulatory requirements. This aligns Ontario with other jurisdictions in Canada, certainly with some that I've travelled to. It's fair to businesses and it will equip public health inspectors to continue to protect patrons of these businesses.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to rise again today in debate to talk about the Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act. Obviously we have discussed this at length and we are into 10-minute rotations. But I think it's important for us to continue to talk about accountability to the patients across Ontario. I'll speak, in particular, to my constituents in Nepean-Carleton within the city of Ottawa and some of the challenges that we see from time to time.

I'd like to talk a little bit about mental health, because I think that's an area where we have not necessarily provided—I think quality is something that we do have, but I think it's the quantity that we don't have. In addition, I think we have not been necessarily the most accountable to those seeking mental health treatments.

In fact, I happen to be on the public accounts committee, so I do read the Auditor General's reports, and then I have the opportunity, for a year afterward, to study those reports and make comment. One of the areas that the Auditor General has brought up is children's mental health and the fact that in, I want to say, the 2003 report of the Auditor General—effectively 14 years later it remains unchanged with some of the criticisms with respect to that.

I have been urging members of this assembly to do more on children's mental health. I think that collaboratively, all together, in a non-partisan, objective way, we can work together to strengthen the system. If there's one thing that comes out of this particular Parliament before the next election, I think it needs to be quality and accountability not just for patients, but in particular for children with mental health issues, particularly those who have very complex mental health requirements in the province of Ontario. I think that's something that could unite us all and bind us together as we move toward strengthening that system.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I do want to comment on the five minutes that the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore brought to the floor of this Legislature. I want to respectfully say that it is that kind of arrogance which breeds the kind of cynicism that exists in the province of Ontario right now.

Let's talk about the omni-results bill. Let's talk about what's in it. It gives landlords of retirement homes the permission to confine residents in retirement homes, despite the lack of proper public oversight of retirement homes. That's not something that I would be bragging about.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Omni-awesome.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Schedule 9 further privatizes health care in the province of Ontario. When you watch where the money is going, it is going to profit and clearly not to the people who we are elected to serve. It gives long-term-care facilities the ability to be penalized with fines up to \$100,000, but it doesn't fund a minimum standard of care in our long-term-care facilities for seniors to ensure that they have the appropriate amount of care, that they have the appropriate amount of time to actually be cared for. That would be omni-awesome, as my colleague has said.

I think people in this province know what's going on. When they go to a hospital, when they go to a clinic, when they pay more out of pocket for services that should be covered by the universal health care system—which this Liberal has now taken credit for, when Tommy Douglas was the member who actually brought this concept of quality health care for everyone—that really is not the reality for the people of this province, with great disparities in services across this province. Actually, the Auditor General has already identified that. We believe the Auditor General.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes on Bill 160 and to comment on the remarks by the members from Etobicoke Centre and Mississauga-Streetsville.

It's no surprise, I suppose, for any of us here this morning that the opposition parties will not have anything good to say, any time, when it comes to health care issues. We understand the challenges and the difficulties in putting in place a very broad, expensive, multi-faceted health care system in the province. It won't matter to anybody that we have hired 28,000 or so more nurses since coming to government. It won't matter to anybody on that side of the hall that we've hired about 6,500 more doctors. It won't matter that we brought in nurse practitioner clinics to help with the orphaned patient population and increased their scope of practice. None of that will matter to them, and I understand that. They're not likely to put that in their remarks. They're not going to talk about much of the positive work that has occurred under this minister and, I would say, other ministers as well.

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Speaker, an old friend of mine—I said this just the other day in the Legislature—once said, “Billy, health care is a political loser. It doesn't matter what you do”—and it's understandable. It's a very emotional thing. When people experience, when they interact, when they interface with the health care system, it's a very difficult thing to always come away with a very positive experience. There are going to be times when it doesn't work for you. But as an expression of our priorities, I think that over the breadth of time we've been in government, people see that this has, in fact, been our number one priority.

In my own riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, we've got a great-news story. We've increased the capacity for long-term care and supportive housing greatly, but we still have pressure on our hospital because we have 64 long-term-care beds sitting empty in Thunder Bay because the LHIN and St. Joseph's Care Group can't fill the PSW spots that are necessary to staff those 64 beds. There's a shortage of PSWs right across the province.

So even when you do a good-news story in the health care system, it's always difficult to land it all the time. The work continues. It always has; it always will.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 160, Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act, 2017—always great titles by the Liberals, but, actually, where is the action? I will give a few examples.

The minister just spoke about nursing and the hiring of nurses. I don't know; if that's all true, then why are the Ontario Nurses' Association and the RNAO advocating for more nurses? This Liberal government has cut nurses. That's a contradictory statement that he can take up with the nurses' association. I think I'll believe the nurses' association before I believe the minister.

I want to talk quickly about the mid-sized hospital funding formula that does not work. It affects 22 mid-sized hospitals in the province of Ontario. I have Ross Memorial Hospital. They have been working to counter this flawed funding formula that discriminates against mid-sized hospitals in the province. You have larger hospitals receiving the benefits of the formula, but mid-sized hospitals are suffering. For example, we can't provide enough knee and hip surgeries. Sometimes the government will give you one-time funding to fix your wait-list, but it doesn't solve the bigger problem of operational costs.

What has happened is that patients in rural Ontario don't get care as good as patients in an urban centre, and that is not right. We are stretched to the limit at the Ross Memorial Hospital. The minister himself realizes that. He even said he's going to address the mid-sized hospital funding formula, and we are still waiting. But patients in my area are suffering, and that's not acceptable.

I want to talk quickly about the rural hospital that I have in Haliburton and the fact that they have a long-term-care centre attached to them, yet they can't get dollars to help increase their upgrades to the long-term-care part of it because they're attached to the hospital.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Ms. Laurie Scott: So there's a lot of work that needs to be done. I appreciate the Speaker's grace in giving me a few extra seconds.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Back to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for final comment.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm pleased to acknowledge the contributions of my

friend and colleague from Nepean–Carleton, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan and the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

This is a bill that strengthens the pillars of Ontario health care. It ensures that a public system stays public. It promotes transparency within the system.

There's one other thing it does that I wish I had had more time to talk about during my five minutes in speaking on the bill. Most of our members are very diligent in visiting long-term-care homes and retirement homes within their respective ridings, and most of us take a real personal interest in them. We've all had constituents who have told us stories of when things have not gone right. For many of us, we think, "Well, I've been to that home and that may be the exception." You would ask yourself, "Is there something in this act that would assist in more effective regulation of retirement homes?"

One of the things the province did was consult on the ways in which Ontario could improve the oversight of retirement homes. Based on what the ministry heard, they proposed some changes in this act. It would include, for example, permitting the Auditor General of Ontario to conduct value-for-money audits based upon the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority. It would also increase transparency, accountability and governance through a number of other changes proposed in the bill. And it makes other amendments to improve the operation of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority, such as establishing deputy registrars to maintain some business continuity.

I'm out of time. I wish I could go on. There's a lot in it, and I look forward to this bill's support and passage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to rise today and speak to this important bill, because we need to get back on track here, Speaker.

We have heard a variety of comments today, but we have to make sure that the people watching today know that the intent of Bill 160 is to strengthen quality and accountability for patients. This bill will do good for vulnerable people throughout Ontario, especially when the bill includes provisions for people as important as our seniors. I know that my colleague the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound already took the government to task for the fact that they are well behind on their goal to provide 30,000 long-term-care beds.

We heard earlier this morning that patients come first. I want to focus on that for a moment, because in the spirit of this bill and in the spirit of accountability, I just want to offer my support and share with my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London that I totally agree with him: Recently the South West Local Health Integration Network, the South West LHIN, parted ways with its CEO, and it's simply wrong to be silent. The South West LHIN is responsible for almost one million people. To have the leadership disappear in a matter of days and for the board to go silent over the weekend is wrong.

People in southwestern Ontario need to hear from the board, so that they have confidence in how our health care is being facilitated throughout that region. So do the right thing: Come forward, talk about the parting of ways with the CEO and please share your vision as to how to keep the confidence of those almost one million people throughout the region, because this debate is to help protect and bring awareness to our vulnerable people, as I mentioned before.

I want to talk about our seniors, because sometimes we hear stories where, in long-term-care homes, residents are restrained. In this legislation, the one thing that popped out for me is that the legislation will bulk up the penalties and the wording surrounding restraining and confining of residents in long-term-care homes. Treating people with constraints and restraints is way out of date, and it's cruel, especially considering the fact that many of these people may have some aspect of dementia and may not have all their mental faculties. Limiting the use of restraints and confinement should be viewed as a priority.

I have to give a shout-out to a person in my office, Ben Menka. Through his high school years, he actually worked in a retirement home. He lived it, and he really cares about how seniors are treated. I do thank him for sharing his thoughts with me as we prepared for this debate today.

The impact of physically restraining a senior can lead to a number of health concerns. Restraint and confinement could mean decreased physical functioning at a point in someone's life where maintaining physical activity is the difference between a healthy and active lifestyle and weakened muscles, which can lead to a devastating fall. Even when completely sound of mind, being physically restrained would be incredibly unpleasant. Now, just imagine the fear and the confusion if you did not have all of your mental faculties about you.

The resolution can be so simple at times: It could just be a little bit more supervision or more hands-on engagement. I'm sure this is how we would all expect to be treated when we are of old age, and I'm sure this is the care that we want for all of our parents and grandparents. The same goes for a resident of a long-term-care facility who requires confinement.

Making sure that a resident or the person acting on their behalf is given a meeting with a rights adviser means that the consent process is more informed and streamlined. This is a good step. We need to have that access. The two schedules of the bill that will directly protect our seniors are admirable goals and they have my support.

1010

Contrary to what we heard earlier today, where it was suggested by government that the opposition just stands up and rails and opposes what the government brings forward, I would suggest that if they took the time and interacted with us, they would hear us and understand that we do like some legislation that comes through the pipes in this House. I just shared with you one example of something that does have my full support.

I would like to suggest that in light of all that, one thing we have not seen from government are recommendations for how the sector will be educated about these new obligations. Any time rules change, internal policies at a long-term-care home and seniors' home will need to be updated. I hope that the government has developed a plan to make sure that everybody is updated, educated and trained so that they're prepared to move forward with what has been suggested through this legislation. What's so important is that everyone is 100% aware of what their new obligations will be in situations that sometimes can require a fast response.

Now, there's another part of the bill I would like to speak to, and that is an omission. Something that is missing from the bill as well is any action on mental health. The only place where this bill touches on mental health is schedule 8. The government claims that the repeal of the Ontario Mental Health Foundation Act is happening because community-based organizations are delivering on their mandate. But, Speaker, I have to tell you, in Huron-Bruce, one of the biggest themes in terms of phone calls I receive from constituents is their concern about how difficult it is to access mental health services. The community-based concept is almost an oxymoron in rural Ontario, back home, because of how far away our services are in terms of accessibility.

One constituent of mine has a child who is on a wait-list, and will need to eventually take his child to London, which is well over an hour away. In rural Ontario, community-based services are underfunded and few and far between. This government has to do better in that regard. The closest thing this particular child has to community-based services right now is their parents and their school.

I've been hoping to see more from this government on mental health, but, unfortunately, the depth which I hoped we could see coming from this government at one point is totally missing from this bill. That is one area of constructive feedback I'd like to give to this government that they may consider at committee level with amendments.

Beyond mental health, there is one more lingering concern I have, and that is with schedule 4. This concern surrounds the inevitable database that will need to be created in order to publicize information that is collected. For example, a similar database in the United States costs around \$300 million annually.

The people of Ontario have short memories when it comes to the Liberal government and databases, so I'll remind them by saying "eHealth." The eHealth scandal is an example that comes to mind when we think about what happens when a health database goes off the rails. What happened to Ontario taxpayers? It cost them \$1 billion, because this government missed the mark.

I hope the government takes into account lessons learned in that regard, in how eHealth was a debacle and, through mismanagement, absolutely wasted \$1 billion of Ontario taxpayer dollars, and, with regard to embracing lessons learned, provides the people of Ontario a government that actually will have the ability to get the

project right and not waste millions and billions of dollars like what has become the norm, unfortunately, with this government.

Another major component of schedule 4 specifically is that the penalties, even for first-time offences, can be quite severe, and we need to take a look at that. We need to make sure that Ontario doctors and their offices are given ample time and education to ensure that they can comply with the new rules.

My colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London made a great point last week. Some payments that exist within the health care system require context. One example that he offered was when pharmacies rent out space to doctors. When this government rushes out omnibus bills, sometimes there will be issues and we'll see things fall through the cracks. I'm worried that this particular example could be one of them.

When Ontario doctors have been pinched by this government and their federal counterparts, we need to make sure that we stand up for them. In fact, the federal government has gone after doctors as well, treating them like tax dodgers and going after their practices.

We need to make sure that the penalties in this legislation do not become another tax grab, but instead are used as an enforcement tool to ensure that Ontarians have complete confidence in their health care system.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would like to thank all members for debate this morning. Questions and comments pertaining to Bill 160—that opportunity will be granted the next time this bill is debated.

It is now 10:15. This House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This morning, colleagues, we have with us in the Speaker's gallery—joining us to pay tribute to a fallen member—David Warner, former MPP for Scarborough–Ellesmere during the 30th, 31st, 33rd and 35th Parliaments and Speaker in the 35th; also, Mr. Mike Farnan, MPP for Cambridge during the 34th and 35th Parliaments. Welcome.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce Sue Christiansen, who lives in my riding of Perth–Wellington.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: We have a delegation today from the Republic of Ireland. Patrick O'Donovan, Minister of State for Public Procurement, Open Government and eGovernment, is joined by the Irish ambassador to Canada, Ambassador Jim Kelly. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce to the House today Chief Joanne Rogers, who is here with a delegation from the Aamjiwnaang First Nation for the Environmental Commissioner's report. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Arthur Potts: My page from Beaches–East York, Colin Angell, is joined here today by his mother, Gail Angell, to make sure he's doing a good job. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to welcome those with the Prompt Payment Ontario delegation today: Sandra Skivsky, Ron Johnson, Jeff Koller, Ania Paliwoda, Dan Lancia, Cathy Frederickson, Ian Cunningham, Ted Barron, Margaret Taylor, Jeff Smith, Jo-Ann Gauthier, and Patricia Penney-Rouzes. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome Brock and Akira Labadie, as well as their dad, Ben, to Queen's Park today. I met Brock when I was in Chatham-Kent this summer and invited him to come to visit. I'm thrilled that they were able to make it today. Welcome.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I'd like to welcome to the House today Robert Kearns, founder and chairman of the Ireland Park Foundation; John Healy, principal officer, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; and Niamh Collins, private secretary to the minister. They're visiting as part of the International Famine Commemoration for 2017 and will be laying a wreath in Ireland Park in Toronto. Thank you for visiting today.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to introduce Francesca Grosso, mother of a former page, Giulia. You might recognize her husband's name—Steve Paikin. He's at the Legislature every now and again.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome a couple of teachers from my riding: Heather Kiemele and Antoinette Lambert.

I'd also like to welcome and celebrate our page captain Thomas, who is from my riding, from Fort Erie. His mother, Fran, his father, Pat, and his brother Nicholas are all here to celebrate today with Thomas. We enjoyed a great Leafs game last night as the Leafs won 3-2.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I also want to welcome members of Prompt Payment Ontario who are visiting Queen's Park. Please welcome Sandra Skivsky and all other members. There will be a reception later tonight at 6 p.m., and I hope all members will attend.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I would like to give a shout-out to page captain Eliana Wallace from Cambridge, and to welcome her parents, Eva and Mark Wallace, who are here in the east members' gallery this morning. Thanks for coming today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to correct my record from yesterday. In response to the question I gave to the member from Huron–Bruce, I mentioned that the Premier's growth challenge has created 59,000 jobs. The answer is actually that more than 57,900 jobs have been created to date.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Members all have the right to correct their records.

We have in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation from the United States representing the National Conference of State Legislators led by Senator Ann Miller. Please join me in welcoming our visitors from the United States.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Remind them it's question period, not answer period.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Also, we don't heckle.

ANNUAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: the 2017 Environmental Protection Report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

MONTGOMERY DAVIDSON

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to recognize the former member of provincial Parliament from Cambridge, Mr. Montgomery Davidson, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent. Do we agree? Agreed.

Before we move to those tributes, would you please join me in welcoming the family and friends of the late Montgomery Davidson, MPP for Cambridge during the 30th and 31st Parliaments, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: his wife, Margaret, son Dean Davidson and his wife, Sharon; daughter Debbie Davidson and her husband, Peter Hugo; son Brad Davidson and his wife, Angelina Johnson; son Glenn Davidson and his wife, Dolly; son Gregg Davidson and his wife, Marianne; and many, many friends and family members. Welcome. We're glad you're with us for the tribute.

The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry and the member from Cambridge.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I'm a proud member of Cambridge, and I stand today on behalf of my constituents to really speak about a great man from Cambridge and a great representative of my community of Cambridge. I'm also happy to welcome his family today: his wife, Margaret, and five of his six children are here today: Dean, Debbie, Brad, Glenn and Gregg; I understand Brett could not be with us today.

Montgomery "Monty" Davidson was first elected in 1975 at the age of 39, but his history and advocacy in representing his fellow citizens of Cambridge started much earlier than that. Monty had an early entry into the workforce, and by the age of 17 he was already a shop steward at Stauffer-Dobbie, a textile factory in Galt. It was here on the shop floor and working alongside everyday working people that he gained an appreciation for and a lifelong desire to improve the standard of living and working conditions of the workers, particularly of textile workers. Cambridge was a hub for textile factories at that time and has a rich textile industrial heritage.

Interestingly, my constituency office was originally built as the head office of the George Pattinson Woollen Mill in 1916.

From his textile mill in Galt, Monty became a trade union organizer, working to further the union movement as a representative for the Textile Workers Union of America. Monty often spoke of the leadership opportunities that the trade union gave him, and it was during these years that he developed his well-heeled sense of helping the average worker, the less fortunate and the vulnerable. Eventually, with much support, he decided to run for the provincial NDP. Monty's "Tomorrow Starts Today" campaign resulted in a historic win: the first NDP member elected to Cambridge in 1975. He proceeded to spend the next two terms continuing to advocate on behalf of his constituents.

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At that time, Cambridge was an NDP fortress, as the federal member was the equally well-regarded Max Saltzman. But Monty worked hard, bringing the shop-floor work ethic to Queen's Park and carrying the trade union movement from the meeting halls to the Legislature.

He was our provincial representative at a very interesting time when Cambridge was formed out of the shotgun marriage of Galt, Preston, Hespeler and the village of Blair. His personality and his desire to do what was best for the people he represented allowed him to make connections between the newly formed communities. Monty was always looking out for the little guy.

His son, Dean, spoke about his dad last year at an NDP event. He said that Monty had so much to do and so much to say but he never did it alone. Dean recalled his parents' strong relationship and said the philosophy in their home was, "It's not behind every successful man or woman, it's beside every successful man or woman is a man or a woman." He recounted how his parents would sit at the dinner table and write Monty's speech together, jokingly referring to his mother as "My father's greatest critic."

He also spoke a bit about his father's unique way to deliver a speech; how he would connect with the audience by pacing up and down on the stage and how he would sometimes be so focused on what he had to say that he would put his hand in his pocket and absent-mindedly jingle the coins and the keys in his pocket. Sometimes I think that made his family cringe.

After the 1981 election, he went on to work for the Ontario Federation of Labour Workers Health and Safety Centre. Here he would continue to fight for safe workplaces and for owners and management to take the steps necessary to give their employees the right opportunities to succeed.

In remembering Monty, former NDP MPP Mike Farnan, who is here with us today, said, "Monty never forgot where his roots were and he was always concerned about his workers."

Fittingly, last year, Cambridge's NDP members created an award in his honour: the Monty Davidson

NDP-Labour Award. This award recognizes an individual who reflects the values that Monty pursued during his life: a passion for workers' health and safety and a passion for the NDP. His son said he was deeply humbled and honoured by this award.

Monty passed peacefully at his home this past March surrounded by his friends and his family. He leaves behind a legacy of advocacy, leadership and achievement, not only for the trade union movement he loved so much, not only for the family he loved so much, but for the people of Cambridge who he was so actively caring about here at Queen's Park and in everything that he did.

His election slogan remains relevant today for both his family and a grateful community: "I'm with Monty." Thank you so much for sharing him with us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm honoured to stand amongst the family, wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of a man whose roots and political activism took him from the shop floor in Galt to Queen's Park and beyond as he championed our most vulnerable both in his home riding and throughout Ontario, former Cambridge MPP Montgomery "Monty" Davidson.

While Mr. Davidson's political work often came from the other side of the floor from where my Conservative predecessors in the then Davis years stood, there is no doubt that when it came to looking out for the people of Cambridge and beyond, all should be proud to pull up a chair to the kitchen table where Monty's political passions, debate and fight for the rights of his fellow brothers and sisters took form as he fought to make a better life for all.

From attending Galt Collegiate, Monty Davidson set out at 15 to work for the Stauffer-Dobbie Ltd. textile plant in Galt. Already a union steward at 17 and a leader in the struggle to organize with the TWA, Monty's direction toward fighting for the rights of his fellow workers was set early on.

As an 11-year international representative with textile workers and the national chairman of the political action committee, Monty soon turned his attention to both provincial and federal politics: a founding member of the provincial NDP, president of the Waterloo South federal association, president of the Ontario young New Democrats and director of the provincial party—a lot of hats to wear, Speaker, but Monty's clear dedication to the cause was enough to ensure that they all fit perfectly.

As his youngest son, Gregg, told me, even in his years before arriving at Queen's Park, "Dad was a constant worker for the people. If we went by a picket line, he would stop and talk to workers. He'd get cigarettes and coffee and bring it to the picket line." Often on the way to a hockey game for the kids, his picket-line stops meant the young Davidsons were putting their hockey equipment on in the car as Dad talked to those on the line.

From youngest to oldest, the story is the same. Eldest son Dean Davidson has noted: "We were born into a household where social, political and union activism were the norm. Handing out leaflets for various causes

was a common activity," a task he recalls first doing at the young age of four.

All the while, as Dad talked at picket lines, and his children handed out leaflets, it was Monty's wife, his partner, Margaret Davidson, who, through those early years and beyond, into Queen's Park, helped guide the Davidson team ahead.

As all members in this House recognize, the special position we hold here is never achieved without the work and sacrifice of many. When it comes to family, spouses—in this case, Margaret, Monty's wife—are not just part of the team; they in fact are the team.

Dean told a crowd years later on the occasion of the establishment of the Monty Davidson NDP-Labour Award that as Monty and his family grew, so too did the discussions and debates that emerged from the centre of all action of the Davidson household, that kitchen table. Dean describes vividly the blue-smoke-tinged air, common in many 1960s kitchens and living rooms, that provided the backdrop for the kitchen table debates where pre-NDP members of the CCF—Stephen Lewis and others—devoted evenings, weekends and indeed years towards planning next steps forward.

Discussion and debate often led to action. In June 1975, Monty the union representative became Monty the provincial Cambridge candidate. Months later, after weeks of family members toiling over silk-screened handmade signs in the backyard, his "Tomorrow Starts Today" campaign helped him become Monty the Cambridge MPP. All the while, the kitchen table discussions continued, planting seeds for issues Monty would bring to Queen's Park, on foolscap and folded into his jacket pocket, before heading out to speak directly from his heart.

Some of those heartfelt words in 1978 were dedicated to a young Cambridge-area boy suffering from a growth-hormone deficiency. The boy's plight prompted Monty to lead the charge to amend the Coroners Act in preserving pituitary glands for production of serum and treatment.

There are many others Monty worked to help in his community. As Gregg mentioned, "He jumped in because he saw there was a need. It wasn't about 'I want to be an MPP'; it was about 'What can I do to help?' He saw inequities, and he wanted to right them." He would go on to right them both in and, later on, out of this House, in work with the Ontario Federation of Labour's Workers Health and Safety Centre before retiring in 1999.

As the years progressed, Monty continued to champion local causes and, in later years, would debate with Gregg the merits of his police officer son's attempts to deal with picketers. Gregg understood that his dad was doing what he always did: standing up for his fellow brothers and sisters on the line.

Monty Davidson was a fighter and a voice for those in need, in Cambridge and throughout the province, to the end. So today I join with all in this House to thank you, Margaret, and the many Davidson generations, for allowing us to share, of course, in Monty's legacy today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is an honour to stand up in the House today to speak about the former member Monty Davidson.

We are joined today, as you've heard, by Margaret Davidson, Monty's spouse of 62 years, as well as their children Dean, Debbie, Brad, Glenn and Gregg, and their partners and their children.

We are also joined by former MPP Mike Farnan and his family, who are here to celebrate Monty's life and legacy.

Monty was a tireless and lifelong activist with the Textile Workers Union of America. He started his career at the young age of 15, when he got a job at Stauffer-Dobbie Ltd., a prominent textile mill. By 17, he was a shop steward. From there, he went on to be the local union president. His time at the textile mill defined his life's work of improving the experience of working people, the less fortunate and the most vulnerable in Ontario.

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In 1975, Monty went from the shop floor to the Legislature, where he served two terms. During his six years at Queen's Park, the values and principles of the trade union movement never left him. They were an integral part of his character and his work ethic.

After his time at Queen's Park, he continued to be a champion for the vulnerable through his work with the OFL and, later, the Workers Health and Safety Centre in Cambridge.

While preparing for this tribute, I had the opportunity to speak with a few people who worked closely with Monty throughout his life. One of them, former Cambridge MPP Mike Farnan, said, "Monty Davidson was a special man. He was bright and intelligent and recognized the role that his union played in his development. He loved negotiating on behalf of his fellow workers and was immensely respected. People trusted him. He never forgot his roots and he has a special place in the hearts of the workers of Cambridge and in the history of textile workers."

During these tributes, we often reflect on the impact that our work has on our children and our families. We could not do this work without their support, and it was emotional to read how Monty's family viewed him and his life's work. One family member commented, "The health and safety of workers was a cause near and dear to our dad." Another remembered never driving past a picket line without stopping and delivering supplies: "Why? Because he believed in those people, their rights and their futures." Another said, "As a family, we have been fortunate to have had a person of strong values and beliefs who has touched our lives and the lives of many others."

Reflecting on Monty's years of activism, one of the Davidson children also said, "I remember the sacrifices that Dad and Mom made together for their cause. Indeed, the sacrifices for a better life for working people were made by our whole family."

All of us in this House know the sacrifices that the families of MPPs make. On behalf of the entire NDP caucus, I want to thank the Davidson family, and Margaret in particular, for the sacrifices and the contributions that they made not only during Monty's years as an MPP but throughout his life as a labour activist.

Monty was also one of the founding members of the provincial NDP, which could not have been easy. Whether inside or outside the Legislature, he was a strong advocate for our province's most vulnerable.

I want to share a story with the House about Monty's time here as an MPP that exemplifies this commitment. Monty fought tirelessly on behalf of children who were not receiving adequate treatments for growth hormone deficiencies, which you've just heard. Eventually, Monty tabled a private member's bill in the House that would have allowed for new and innovative treatments for these children. Monty's private member's bill was rewritten as legislation by the governing party, a story some of us know too well, and was passed by Premier Bill Davis's PCs. After the bill was passed, Premier Davis crossed the floor and shook Monty's hand, acknowledging Monty's hard work on behalf of children with growth hormone deficiencies. This was one of Monty's proudest moments as an MPP.

Monty would often say that he was a fortunate man to be doing what he loved: standing up for what was right. Indeed, we are thankful for Monty's commitment to workers in the province of Ontario, to his community of Cambridge and to his work here at Queen's Park. Thank you to the Davidson family.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their very heartfelt and very kind words. As this tribute takes place, I would also like to thank the family and let them know that we will make a DVD and the Hansard comments available to the family members for their future use. And finally, we thank you for the gift of Montgomery "Monty" Davidson.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Let me share a quote from the recent Auditor General's report: "The government created a needlessly complex accounting/financing structure for the electricity rate reduction in order to avoid showing a deficit or an increase in net debt."

We understand that they created this needlessly complex scheme and it's going to cost us \$4 billion, but what the government has not answered is who's going to pay that \$4 billion. They like to be a little too cute about that. I want the Premier to stand up here today and tell Ontarians exactly who's going to pay that additional \$4 billion due to her schemes.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I have said in this House and I have said in public outside of this House,

there were massive investments in an electricity system that had been degraded. When we came into office under the previous Premier in 2003, there was a system in this province that had been neglected. There were brownouts and blackouts. There were thousands of kilometres of line that needed to be rebuilt. We made those investments. We made those investments, and there was a cost associated with that.

What we know is that that cost was being borne by people in the province today. They were saying to us, and they were saying to all of us in the Legislature, that their electricity prices were going up too quickly and they were going up too high. We addressed that. People are seeing a reduction on their electricity bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: That's some pretty clever spin for how you made the decision, a calculated decision, to blow \$4 billion.

Interjections.

Mr. Patrick Brown: They may be laughing about this \$4 billion, \$1 billion here and \$1 billion there, but it's not a laughing matter. People can't afford their hydro bills.

Let me share a quote from TVO: "This isn't an 'accounting disagreement': it's not even particularly advanced civics. Leaders should be held to account for the decisions they make, and governments should make it easy for voters to do so by ensuring their decisions are clear and understandable.

"The fact that the Liberals disagree on this point says a lot about where the party that ran on basic, no-nonsense good government reforms in 2003 has ended up 14 years later." That's a direct quote from TVO.

My question for the Premier is: When did this happen? When did they stop caring about the people of Ontario, and more about the self-interest of the Ontario Liberal—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I think any party in this province that cares about the people of Ontario would have a plan to reduce electricity prices, as well as a plan to have an efficient and reliable electricity system. Anyone who cares about the people of Ontario wants to make sure that the lights go on when you flick the switches, that we don't have brownouts and blackouts, and that the cost of that be borne in a reasonable way.

We were very clear, when we brought forward our fair hydro plan, that the cost of the upgrades that had to be made to the electricity system would be borne over a longer period of time. I think it's fair, when government after government after government neglected the electricity system, when it was finally upgraded—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The banter going back and forth is enough. If it continues, I'll immediately move to warnings. It's pretty early.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've been clear that our plan does this, provides for the reasonable bearing of these costs—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right, you want to challenge me? The member from Prince Edward-Hastings, come to order. We're now in warnings.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —the cost of those investments moved over a longer period of time. We've also been clear that the fair hydro plan keeps the cost of borrowing within the rate base, not the tax base, because that is the logical thing to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: What I can't get an answer on is, we have an Auditor General's report that says that you are wasting \$4 billion because of the manner that you're doing the scheme—\$4 billion that Ontario families can't afford. Now, in the midst of this—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay. Minister of Finance, you're warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sure you don't want to be next.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: In the midst of this bombshell that the government is wasting \$4 billion, the Auditor General has still not gotten the emails she requested.

I'm worried this is Pete's Project 2.0. Why is it taking so long? Are there Liberal staffers furiously deleting emails? Why is it taking so long to have the proper disclosure? Wasn't this supposed to be the most transparent government? What have they become?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Speaker, I totally disagree with the characterization of the accounting.

Let's stop and think about how the electricity sector works and what the norm is for accounting in the electricity sector. In fact, when OPG borrows to finance nuclear generators or hydro or whatever, it appears on OPG's books. When Hydro One borrows to fund new transmission lines or in the areas where they're the local distributor, it's on their books. Toronto Hydro—it's on their books. Guelph Hydro—it's on their books. It is the norm in the electricity sector that the borrowing done by that electrical utility goes on that utility's books.

It is further true that OPG and Hydro One already have rate-based accounting, and that has been approved by the auditor—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. When the FAO, the Financial Accountability Office, was introduced, the Liberal minister said, "I wish there was someone at the beginning, a neutral third party, whom we could have gone to, to get the type of advice and input that would have allowed us to foresee any of the challenges or problems that arose." They celebrated the creation of this office. Now we have a situation where they're ignoring the FAO. They've been in a year-long battle with the Ombudsman. Every chance they get, they attack the Auditor General. There doesn't seem to be a non-partisan officer of the Legislature that they don't disagree with.

My question is: Is there a single legislative officer that this government can actually support? Is there a single legislative officer that they're not willing to disparage?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The reality is that we work with all of the officers of the Legislature, Mr. Speaker. Our officials work with them, our ministers work with them and we do our utmost to answer their questions and to provide the information that they need.

From every single report that comes to us from officers of the Legislature, we can make improvements. It is a very important process. We value the input, we value that critical eye on the work of government, and we will continue to work with all of the officers of the Legislature, as we have done throughout our term.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: They say they enjoy working with the legislative officers, yet on every single occasion they disparage them. They say they thank them for their reports, but the reports are saying that this is a house of cards. Their numbers do not add up. You even had one report that said they make up their own accounting rules. Mr. Speaker, that's not working with them, that is ignoring them. That is attacking them.

There was one article I read yesterday that said, "Ontario's War on Truth." The government only likes to deal in truths or facts if it suits their political survival.

I know in a debate who I'm going to believe. Do I believe the facts of the Auditor General or do I believe the facts of this Premier and this government? Because the track record is, again and again, our legislative officers are correct and this government's numbers are wrong.

My question is: When will this government stop their war on our independent legislative officers?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am always happy to debate the truth. I'm particularly happy to debate the truth with the Leader of the Opposition—any time, Mr. Speaker.

The truth is that we had a situation in terms of electricity prices in this province that needed to be addressed.

There was question after question after question in this House from a party that had no plan to address the electricity prices in the province about what our plan was. We brought a plan forward and people across this province are seeing a 25%, on average, reduction on their electricity bills.

We were very clear that over the period of—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that over the period of the next generation, we would smooth the costs and there would be a premium attached to that, as there is with a mortgage. We were also clear that—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: A \$6-billion smoothie.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton is warned, the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook is warned and the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is warned. We'll go down this road if you're choosing.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, if I knew who that was. It might even entice me to go to naming.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's also clear that we believe it was fair; that when a huge investment in upgrading the electricity system was made, it would be fair for not just this generation but the next generation, who will also benefit from that asset, to pay part of that cost.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Premier stands in this House and insists that her government is not attacking our independent legislative officers. That same article, "Ontario's War on Truth," said, "The Ministry of Energy went so far as to personally contact journalists the day before her report was released to say the auditor's interpretation is flawed."

Even before they had seen the report, senior ministers in this government were calling journalists to attack the—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport is warned.

And for the House, we're really close to naming. If you don't think I will, I will. I might even bypass warnings. It's going to be civil here.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Calling journalists the night before to attack the Auditor General does not sound like a government that's working with our legislative officers.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is, for a government that said they were about openness and transparency and working with our legislative officers, I want to know if the Premier condones her ministers calling journalists the night before an Auditor General's report to attack the Auditor General. Do you condone that?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my first answer, it is extremely important that we respect

and work with the officers of the Legislature, which we do.

As a minister, I would sit down with officers of the Legislature and have conversations about what was going on in the ministry before reports were written. Ministry officials work with the officers of the Legislature to make sure they have all the information they need. It's a very important function.

Today the Environmental Commissioner's annual report is going to be out. There will be criticisms of the things that we have done as a government; there will be acknowledgement of progress that has been made; and, most importantly, there will be a direction forward in terms of how to improve. We will continue to work with the Environmental Commissioner, as we do with all of the officers of the Legislature. It's a very important function and we'll continue to work with them as we have in the past.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. This morning, we learned through media reports that 14 long-term-care homes in the city of Toronto are either planning to move out of the city or seriously considering it. That means there are 1,800 frail, elderly people in Toronto right now who could be forced to move or risk losing their homes.

What is the Premier's plan to make sure that these 1,800 seniors aren't forced out of their homes?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question from the member opposite, and I understand that the Long Term Care Association, I believe, is going to be coming out tomorrow with some information about some of the challenges that they believe the sector is facing.

What we know, Mr. Speaker, is that we need more long-term-care beds. We need more support for people who are aging in the province, including more home care. We continue to increase funding to home care. We know that as the long-term-care sector goes through a transformation to upgrade beds—because that's what this is about. This is about making sure that frail, elderly seniors have the very best environment in which to spend their days.

We will continue to work with the Long Term Care Association. We understand there are challenges, and we're going to work with them so we can solve those challenges.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ontario has 30,000 people on a wait-list for a bed in a long-term-care home right now. If every home that is considering leaving Toronto actually does, what will that mean for the 1,800 seniors in those beds? What is the Premier's plan to make up the loss of those beds for Toronto seniors and their families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: From the outset, I want to emphasize that of the 20 long-term-care homes in Toronto

referenced by the CBC today, we have not received a single application or proposal that suggests or advocates for any beds whatsoever to leave Toronto. I want to emphasize as well that no long-term-care beds can leave any community without my explicit written approval.

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Also, in June of this year, I was very proud to be in downtown Toronto in West Don Lands announcing a brand new redevelopment in Toronto, and I'm happy to speak more about that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Back to the Premier: The Premier's legacy when it comes to long-term-care beds can be described in one word: less. There's less funding, there's less oversight, there are less beds available, and there is less dignity for the parents and grandparents.

When will the Premier finally acknowledge the crisis that she and her government have helped to create in our long-term-care system and do something to help seniors meet the care needs they have?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: To reiterate, it is not my intention, nor will it be, for long-term-care beds to leave a community—any community.

The member from Nipissing knows that we're working very closely together on a long-term-care solution for Trout Lake to keep those beds in that community.

The member for Brant—Mr. Speaker, I won't reference you directly on this. But there are many communities around the province where I'm working directly to ensure that the communities retain those.

Earlier this year, in downtown Toronto and West Don Lands, Rekai, a not-for-profit long-term-care operator, announced and celebrated a brand new redevelopment on new land that they purchased in downtown Toronto. It can be done.

But most importantly, there can be no movement of beds without my explicit written approval. We're working with all of our stakeholders to find solutions that work for them and for their clients.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. These 14 long-term-care homes are considering moving because the Premier and her Liberal government have failed for decades to provide the proper planning and to make the investments in our long-term-care facilities. Back in 2007, the Liberal government promised to redevelop 35,000 long-term-care-home beds by 2017, so that the residents would have the facilities they need to live in. But by 2014, seven long years later, there were only 5,000 beds under redevelopment, and 30,000 of them had not changed a bit. Those residents were still waiting for appropriate care.

Can the Premier tell us how many long-term-care beds are still in need of redevelopment today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm proud of the changes and improvements that we've made in our long-term-care system since coming into office in 2003. We have built, or our partners have built with licences provided to them from the government, 10,000 new long-term-care beds across this province. Our partners—for-profit and not-for-profit—have already redeveloped 13,500 long-term-care beds. We're on track for a total of 30,000 over a 10-year period.

We're working with virtually every community. We're finding those important, creative ways that reflect and appreciate and respect their requirements for the operators and the business models that need to work for them. But most of all, both parties come together because we're focused on client care, on resident care, and providing the best-quality long-term care for the residents.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's not just the redevelopment of beds that this Liberal government is failing at. We hear horror stories daily: seniors being left in beds for 16 hours straight, not being able to reach the bathroom in time, or being left to sit in soiled clothes for hours on end because no one is there to help them, not to mention the cases of abuse that make the front page of the papers.

The Premier has a chance to do the right thing right now for the seniors and their families. Will the Premier expand the government inquiry into the murders committed by Elizabeth Wettlaufer to include the broad, systemic issues that need to be fixed in our long-term-care system?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member opposite knows, and we have spoken about this many times in the Legislature, that in the public inquiry, the justice has the scope within the terms of reference to address whatever issue in long-term-care homes she believes is pertinent to reaching the conclusion that will result in the highest level of safety, security and quality of care for residents of this province who call long-term care their home.

I am increasingly frustrated that the third party appears to be opposed to virtually everything we do and everything we propose, like the Humber River redevelopment site for restorative care, the 150 beds there that will open up this calendar year that I spoke to yesterday.

I wonder if the members from Windsor are opposed to the 20 additional acute care beds that we're adding to Windsor Regional Hospital. I'm wondering if the member from Welland is also opposed to the 26 new beds that we're adding in acute care at the Welland site. It just is very difficult to see what they're for and what they're against.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Front-line long-term-care workers are doing the very best they can, but they need help from this Premier. We need a find-and-fix approach to this crisis, and we need a Premier who will tackle these problems head on instead of turning a blind eye. She has heard the call of families with loved ones in care in this

chamber many times. Will the Premier finally stop ignoring them and expand the scope of the Wettlaufer inquiry?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: With the fearmongering of the NDP, they would likely close every single long-term-care home in this province. That's the narrative they're creating. That's the rhetoric that they're responsible for.

I'm still wondering if the members from London in the third party agree or disagree with the 24 new acute care beds that we're opening this calendar year at London Health Sciences or the 24 new acute mental health beds that we're opening as well at London Health Sciences Centre. Or in Hamilton, if the leader of their party agrees or disagrees with the three new neonatal intensive care beds we're opening this calendar year or the 30 new acute care beds at Hamilton Health Sciences or whether at St. Joseph's in downtown Hamilton, the 24 new acute care beds.

I need to know because they seem to oppose virtually every good solution that the public, patients, residents and clients appreciate, respect and applaud. They seem to be against every solution.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, you and your Premier found \$25 billion for an election scheme to cover up your hydro issues. Today we have 1,800 seniors in 14 homes that could possibly close.

You've said on record you will not allow any homes to move. Will you put that in writing? Will you not give express written permission for a home to move? Seniors have lost trust. The long-term-care industry has lost trust. Minister, today, I want you to again reiterate that you will not allow any home to move, with your express written permission.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I will not allow any home to move beds without my explicit written permission. That's what is required in the legislation. That has been the case every single time when an operator has come forward.

I think it's critically important that Torontonians and those in the GTA who rely on these beds in Toronto and the surrounding areas know clearly, and that there's no rhetoric or narrative that opposes this truth, that is the reality, that I need to approve them. But of the 20 long-term-care homes in Toronto referenced by the CBC this morning, I have not and the ministry has not received a single application from them which advocates or requests a movement of beds outside of Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is going to the Premier. Today, 32,000 seniors are on a wait-list, 20 homes have threatened to close and that could just be the tip of the iceberg; 1,800 seniors are at risk of losing their long-term-care beds just in Toronto, let alone the rest of Ontario.

Lorraine Purdon, executive director of Family Councils of Ontario, has said, "It is always a concern that homes may have to move outside the city, because it involves moving a vulnerable population from their home and creates stress for the family caregivers." It's an unneeded stress you can end today.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier: Will you guarantee the residents and their families that their nursing homes won't be closing? And equally, how many beds will you build to get those people off that 32,000 wait-list?

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Hon. Eric Hoskins: We fully understand, are cognizant of and appreciate the challenges that our partners in the long-term-care system have. The investment that the government makes toward the capital cost of redevelopment is between 60% and 80% of that total capital cost. That is a significant contribution; I think we can all agree on that.

But we are working with our partners. We are working with both the not-for-profit and the for-profit operators that are looking at creative solutions to provide the highest quality of care and upgrade their facilities through redevelopment so that they can provide that standard of care that all of us would expect for our loved ones. We're doing that.

We're cognizant of the different challenges that exist across the province. I have referenced one example with Rekai in downtown Toronto. Mark my words: There will be other examples in Toronto because we're working so closely to make sure that this works for everyone.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, to the Premier: This morning I moved a motion to force this Liberal government to release emails to the public that were examined by the Auditor General in her recent report on hydro. These emails show that the Liberal government spent an extra and unnecessary \$4 billion to hide the damage that their \$40-billion hydro borrowing scheme will visit on the people of Ontario.

Unsurprisingly, Liberals voted against the motion to avoid having to disclose these embarrassing emails. Will the Premier release the emails to the people of Ontario right now, of her own accord?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of questioning that comes up from time to time when a request is made for information. The government does everything that it has to do and wants to do to comply. That's exactly what's happening now.

The emails that have been requested are being complied with. In fact, as of today, over 30,000 emails have been moved forward, and whatever is left, they're to come. I think the commitment that the minister has made is best as they can—to have these emails to the Auditor General, I believe, by November 1.

It takes time to do this. It's not something we do in our offices; it's something that our public servants do to ensure that the emails that are requested are indeed the emails that are provided. So it takes a little bit of time. Those are just the mechanisms of how these things work.

We're happy to comply and we will.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: This is a question of emails coming to the public so the public can actually see for themselves what's going on. The people of this province have the right to know who authorized this \$40-billion accounting trick.

That Premier has told Ontarians over and over again that she is the most open and transparent person to ever occupy her office. She talks a good game, but when it comes down to actually doing the things that are open and transparent, the people of this province have been let down every single time.

Why won't the Premier take this chance to show the people of Ontario that she can, in fact, keep her promises and release these emails now?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I think I responded pretty straightforwardly to the member in his first question.

But let me say this about the other part of his question: The fact is that three of Canada's leading accounting firms, Ernst and Young, KPMG and Deloitte, completely agree with the approach that this government has taken. This isn't a unique approach for this government; it's not a unique approach for any government. It's called a rate-regulated accounting approach. It's taken by six out of the eight independent system operators across North America. It's perfectly normal.

If the member is accusing something of being untoward here, then I guess he's saying that there is something going on in Alberta that's untoward, or something in New England that's untoward, or something in New York state that's untoward, or something in Michigan that's untoward, or something in the Midwest and eastern seaboard, or maybe Texas.

Mr. Speaker, this is a regular accounting process. It's time for the NDP and the opposition to understand that this is a very legitimate way to account for these costs.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. We all know that Ontario is a competitive jurisdiction where people want to invest. This is something I hear from different sectors whenever I cross this province. People want to come and invest in Ontario.

Waterloo region, for example, has an ever-growing number of high-quality jobs, particularly in the innovation and tech sectors. In fact, Ontario is home to two of the largest start-up ecosystems in the world, one of them being in Waterloo and the other being in my town of Toronto.

But in order to maintain our competitive edge, we need to make sure we have a world-class transportation

network that connects commuters to these opportunities. That is why I am very pleased to know that our government is moving forward on high-speed rail all the way to Windsor, with stops along the way, including one in Kitchener.

Would the minister please provide more information on what exactly our government has done to date to make high-speed rail a reality here in Ontario?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member from Davenport for her question and for her advocacy on this particular topic and others. Our government has been very clear about our commitment to build high-speed rail between Toronto and Windsor, and we continue to make progress on this historic project.

In May, I was very pleased to join the Premier to announce an initial \$15-million investment for a comprehensive environmental assessment. Just yesterday, the Premier announced the next important step, which is the establishment of a high-speed-rail planning advisory board that will provide strategic support for this important project.

A project of this size, the first of its kind in Canadian history, cannot be taken lightly. That's why we need the skills and expertise of a dedicated board with members from the innovation, planning and infrastructure sectors, just to name a few. The board will also play a critical role in engaging key partners, including the private sector and our indigenous communities. I know that through their hard work and our government's ongoing commitment, we will deliver high-speed rail.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you to the minister for his answer. It is clear that high-speed rail is truly a historic project. We need to make sure that we get it right. This is a project that will support not just today's generations, but generations to come.

As the minister made absolutely clear in his answer, our government is committed to seeing this project through. But unlike the members on this side of the House, the parties opposite continue to flip-flop on their support for high-speed rail. One day, they like it; the other day, we don't know. That is truly disappointing to so many communities along the future line, including communities like London, Windsor and Chatham that have representatives on the other side of the House.

Would the minister please provide more information on why our government is absolutely clear on the fact that we need to move this project forward?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I want to thank the member from Davenport for her follow-up question. I also want to take a moment to thank the members in our caucus from communities like Guelph, Kitchener, Cambridge and London for their staunch advocacy for this particular project. On a regular basis, these members join with the Premier, myself and our entire team to make sure that we actually get shovels in the ground and build high-speed rail.

We know from an economic development standpoint and from a transportation standpoint that it's absolutely

essential that we get this job done. I can say once again very clearly, on behalf of the Premier and our government, that we are steadfast. We will make this happen, Speaker. We understand the critical importance of making sure that we do get it right and that we do get those shovels in the ground. We are going to work with our advisory board to make sure that we get it done the right way, in a way that makes the most sense for the communities that we're proud to represent.

Again, to my caucus colleagues, I want to say: Keep pushing and keep prodding. Together, this government and this Premier will make this happen.

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, MPPs had the opportunity to give northern Ontario an important voice in the decision-making process. The committee debated an amendment that would have put at least one northern member on the new Local Planning Appeal Support Centre. That means northern communities would have a say within the reformed OMB.

Unfortunately, the Liberal-dominated committee, led by the member for Northumberland—Quinte West, Lou Rinaldi, voted it down. Why does the government continually shut northern Ontario out? Why did the member for Northumberland—Quinte West and the Liberal-dominated committee deny the north an opportunity to have their voices heard?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Although he corrected it the second time, the member knows that we don't use names here; we use titles or ridings. I remind all members to stick to that.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. I found out this morning about this particular amendment that was proposed by the PCs in discussions with my staff about how yesterday's committee hearing went.

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It was interesting to me that on an issue that for decades, I would say it's fair to say, has been dogging Toronto and larger municipalities in southern Ontario—OMB reform—an issue that at second reading was supported by the provincial Conservatives, at committee, over the course of a number of days, the single strongest amendment and suggestion they could come forward with on this particular legislation was to see if they could get a northern member put onto the OMB.

I'm not saying it's good, bad or indifferent, but what I know is that if that's all they have got to come up with after that length of time on legislation that is this important to the planning needs and the long-term horizon under which our growth plan is focused, then I think we've got this plan in a pretty good place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: Back to the Premier: I was in the committee hearing yesterday and as I told the committee, the biggest complaint you hear when you travel around northern Ontario is about Toronto-based decision-making. Northerners are frustrated by decisions made at Queen's Park that just don't work in northern Ontario. Northern Ontario is tired of being ignored by this government. Northerners want a voice at the table, but this government continues to deny them the opportunity.

The OMB doesn't just impact the GTA; it doesn't just impact the suburbs and big cities; it impacts every single community, large and small, in Ontario.

Why did the Liberal committee vote down this sensible and inclusive amendment? Why does this government think that insiders at Queen's Park are better able to deal with northern housing issues than the people from northern Ontario?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Minister of the Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I appreciate the question and I'm sure the members opposite know that the members of the Ontario Municipal Board or, if legislation passes, the new Local Planning Appeal Tribunal—that those tribunals are quasi-judicial in nature and those members are adjudicators. They have a judge-like function. They go through a process through the Public Appointments Secretariat to get appointed, based on their qualifications. These individuals are not hand-picked; this is not just a board; these are actually our adjudicators who, with a fair bit of training, ensure that, based on evidence that is presented before them, they make a decision.

Surely the members opposite want the most qualified people, whether they're from northern Ontario, southern Ontario, eastern Ontario—every part of the province—because these are important to our institutions.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: In her report today, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario said that the Ontario government has “long turned a blind eye” to pollution that adversely affects many indigenous communities. Whether it's decades of ongoing mercury poisoning at Grassy Narrows or air pollution at Aamjiwnaang First Nation, the ECO says, “The conditions faced by these indigenous communities would not be tolerated elsewhere in Ontario, yet have long been deemed unworthy of priority, effort or expense.”

This government has been in power for 14 years. Why has the Premier treated these indigenous communities as unworthy of priority, effort or expense?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you for what is a very important and very serious question, but it's one where I can say the premise of the question is not accurate. I have a long list of initiatives that this government has undertaken and it's my mandate to make sure that I take care of when it comes to working with indigenous and First Nations communities within Ontario.

First and foremost, I want to thank the commissioner and her office for her thoughtful report on actions that we can take to better protect Ontario's environment and better protect indigenous communities. We certainly appreciate her supportive comments, but we agree that there is always more that needs to be done. I'll get into some of the things we're doing in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: While the Premier's rhetoric around environmental protection and reconciliation has changed, the Environmental Commissioner says the government must do much more to protect First Nations communities that are disproportionately affected by pollution.

In Aamjiwnaang First Nation, we recently learned that the government has failed to take meaningful action after repeated violations of the Environmental Protection Act. This government has also missed its own deadline to update sulphur dioxide standards, and it has muzzled its own engineers, preferring to listen to industry lobbyists. Why has the Premier failed the Aamjiwnaang First Nation?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Let's talk about some of the things that this government is doing and that my ministry is doing when it comes to improving the lives of folks who are on indigenous communities.

Recently, we committed \$85 million in dedicated funding to remediate the English-Wabigoon river system through collaboration with First Nation communities there—\$85 million. Additionally, Ontario is working with First Nations and the federal government to resolve all long-term drinking water advisories in First Nation communities in the next five years.

But, Speaker, we recognize that more needs to be done. Let's talk about Sarnia for a second. I was down to visit Chief Rogers in the Aamjiwnaang nation and meet with the community and hear first-hand what concerns they have there. We have agreed to a health study. That is important, and we will continue to drive down emissions in that community.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of International Trade. On Thursday, October 19, the minister released a new global trade strategy called Seizing Global Opportunities. I want to commend the minister for driving this agenda.

As our world becomes increasingly globalized, we have more opportunities than ever to make connections across borders and overseas. With these opportunities at our fingertips, Ontario has the ability to expand our trade horizons, thereby increasing our global presence.

Trade plays such a critical role in our economy, creating growth which boosts our overall GDP, bringing jobs to the province and enriching people's lives. Ontario has much to offer the world, and it's encouraging to hear that the Ministry of International Trade has identified diversification as a top priority.

Speaker, could the minister please offer some details on the new global trade strategy?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member from Kitchener Centre for this important question. One of my ministry's main objectives is to help Ontario diversify its trade, both in partners and in goods and services. Diversification is especially important now, because as we broaden our global footprint, we also reduce economic risks and grow our economy.

Our strategy is aimed at connecting regional and local businesses to global partners in order to create relationships across borders. For instance, Speaker, in the member's riding of Kitchener Centre, we have a seminar taking place on November 1 that will help new and potential exporters develop a global mindset and access resources and partners, which will help in taking their business global.

With CETA in place, we have already made great strides in increasing our diversification.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you to the minister for his answer. It's very encouraging to hear of these new developments, and it's especially great to hear of progress in my community.

I know that local businesses in my riding of Kitchener Centre are going to be very pleased to hear of the seminar next week on Developing a Global Mindset. This is of great significance to those who are in the high-tech sector, as well as advanced manufacturing, which by the way supports about 20% of all jobs in my region. I encourage anyone who is interested across the province to register for the seminar on the ministry's website.

It is well known that small and medium-sized businesses are the core of the Canadian economy. That's why our government has made it a top priority to assist smaller businesses in expanding and growing. Could we hear more on how the minister's global trade strategy is targeting small businesses to help them go global and increase Ontario's presence across borders?

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Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, my ministry's new global trade strategy comprises four pillars which, combined, will fundamentally change the way that SMEs conduct business globally.

Our first objective is to leverage our trade and investment assets through diversifying and strengthening our trade relationships, while creating a more inclusive environment. Secondly, my ministry will become a central hub for Ontario trade, thus simplifying exporter services and programs. Third, we will develop better research and intelligence in order to drive trade in priority sectors and markets. Finally, this strategy will modernize our current networks and infrastructure to accurately reflect the current trade landscape.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mrs. Gila Martow: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Recently a report was released from the child welfare sector detailing the rates

of homelessness for youth who were raised by the ministry's child protection system. A coalition of organizations found that 60% of homeless youth have been involved in child protection. Of those, almost two of every five respondents had aged out of provincial care, losing access to the sort of support that would have kept them from becoming homeless.

We seem to be leaving the most vulnerable children in our society behind after the traumatic abuse and neglect that they received at home. Today I'm wearing purple to raise awareness for these youth to compel this ministry to take action. For 40 years, youth outcomes after care have been disappointing, including homelessness, jail, early parenthood, poverty and loneliness.

Mr. Speaker, why is this minister allowing his ministry policies to increase youth homelessness?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I would like to welcome the newly formed organization, the Child Welfare Action Committee, to Queen's Park today, and to thank them for the work they're doing to support young people here in the province of Ontario.

I have to say I'm a bit perplexed with the question coming from the member opposite, and I'll tell you why. On June 1 of this year, we put forward a proposal to this House to bring forth the most comprehensive piece of legislation probably in the history of this House. It was a 300-page document, very comprehensive. It raised the age of protection; it put children at the centre of decision-making. We worked with the NDP and the Conservatives on over 100 amendments to get it right. I have to thank the NDP for supporting that bill.

That bill raised the age of protection here in the province of Ontario and that party voted against it. We still don't know why this party here voted against a bill that was endorsed by many of our stakeholders, by the people of Ontario, and protected children here in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Again to the minister: Youth homelessness is at a crisis level and recent studies suggest this minister's policies may be to blame. The minister is not measuring the outcomes for youth leaving care. As such, it is impossible to understand which policies are improving life outcomes for youth or which ones have no effect. There is no excuse for this. Other provinces are measuring youth outcomes after care, but this minister seems late to the game. We need a data-informed system that is checking its impact and measuring its own success, as a parent would.

It's not unreasonable for Ontarians to expect that the ministry help the children they serve, and helping involves more than warehousing vulnerable children in a system that seems disinterested in their futures. Why does this minister spend billions on policies, programs and system changes without checking to see if they are having a positive impact on the youth they are designed to serve?

Hon. Michael Coteau: This is a very serious issue that we're talking about here today. This piece of legis-

lation, Bill 89, was supported, I believe, in the first and second reading. We had all indications by the Progressive Conservatives that they were going to support this bill. When it came up to a vote, there was a divide that took place and we still don't know why the Progressive Conservative Party did not support Bill 89.

Was it because it was providing culturally appropriate services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children? Was it Katelynn's Principle? Was it putting children at the centre of decision-making? Was it recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion? Was it acknowledgement of systemic racism? Was it delivering culturally appropriate services to African Canadian and black children here in the city of Toronto who are over-represented? Was it collecting identity-based data? Or was it the words "gender identity"? I want to know.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Premier. Chronic underfunding by this government has Ontario colleges operating as though they are for-profit businesses rather than a vital public good. Overuse of part-time faculty has ballooned to a shocking 81% at colleges across Ontario. Instructors are forced to string together multiple contracts across multiple colleges, and many are required to find additional employment just to make ends meet. The government has created and embraced a culture of part-time, precarious contract work in our colleges.

The government doesn't seem to get it: In Ontario we need good, full-time jobs if we're going to have a strong economy in the 21st century. What is this Liberal government doing to stop the decline of full-time jobs in our colleges?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the President of the Treasury Board is going to want to comment. Let me just say that we want to see students back in college classrooms as soon as humanly possible.

I had the opportunity to talk to some instructors who were outside of the city hall in Kitchener yesterday. We talked about the challenges, and they had the opportunity to give me some of their perspectives.

I have committed to them and to all who have asked me that we'll do everything we can to encourage both sides to get back to the table. I would think that this member especially would understand that it's important that the bargaining happen at the table, that that is where the agreement should be reached. We want everyone to get back to the table to come to an agreement there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yesterday in a CBC article, College Employer Council CEO Don Sinclair said he just doesn't see the strike being resolved any time soon. Faculty want to go back to work and the students want to go back to school, but the reality is that without equal pay for equal work, there will be no fast, fair, quick resolution. Yet this government continues to drag the strike out by refusing to commit to providing the resources

needed for workers in Ontario to have equal pay for equal work. Legislating equal pay for equal work means nothing if the government refuses to support more full-time faculty positions.

Will this government commit today to properly funding equal pay for equal work in Ontario's colleges?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Obviously, we'll do everything we can to encourage the parties to get back to the table, but I fundamentally disagree with the premise of your question—

Ms. Catherine Fife: You've got the money.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Liz Sandals: If you look at the 50-year history of Ontario's colleges, they're doing a fantastic job of delivering skills-based training and education. Some 83% of the students are employed six months after graduation, 79% of graduates are satisfied or very satisfied with their college program, and here's a very important fact: 91% of employers are satisfied or very satisfied with college—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Liz Sandals: In fact, this very impressive college system actually has received a lot of funding. In 2016-17, the government allocated \$1.47 billion in total operating grants to colleges. That's an 82% increase since—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Han Dong: My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. As Canada celebrates its 150th anniversary, Ontario has had an incredible opportunity to create economic and cultural legacies by supporting a wide range of exciting festivals and events. Our festivals and events not only attract tourists but support tens of thousands of jobs and generate millions in economic growth. This year, I'm proud to be part of a government investing more than \$19 million in order to support over 300 festivals and events. That's a record number.

1150

We've seen the province-wide impact of these festivals and events in both small and large communities. In my riding of Trinity-Spadina and across Ontario, the government's support for festivals and events has played a fundamental role in our cultural and economic vitality. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can she tell us more about the success of the Celebrate Ontario recipients?

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you to the member from Trinity-Spadina for the question and for his firm support of the tourism sector. On this side of the House,

we understand the important role that festivals and events play in terms of the economic development and well-being of our province and our communities. In short, Speaker, we believe that fun and financial well-being can, and often do, go hand in hand.

Thanks to the investments we've made, we're able to support successful festivals and events like the Redpath Waterfront Festival, giving them the tools they need to attract people and investments to Toronto. And, yes, they chose a duck with a record of success around the world, and you know what, Speaker, while we didn't fund the duck as the opposition maintained, as it turns out it was definitely all it was quacked up to be. It attracted over 750,000 visitors, had an economic impact of \$7.6 million and supported 124 jobs, giving a much-needed boost to the water taxi industry in Toronto, because they needed it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: Speaker, I want to thank the minister for her answer. Many festivals and events like the Redpath Waterfront Festival are having a positive impact on tourism in Ontario. The crowds were lining up to see the duck, and I hope the Leader of the Opposition had a chance to take a selfie with the duck, as well.

Speaker, that economic boost for our local economies indicates that our investments are effective and critically important for our tourism sector. Across the province, support for Celebrate Ontario 2017 means that organizers can enhance their programming, activities and services. They can offer new and enhanced experiences that attract even more tourists and increase visitor spending. I know that Celebrate Ontario will have a positive economic impact in every corner of the province in 2017.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can she update the members of this House on Celebrate Ontario 2018?

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Our Celebrate Ontario program triggers nearly \$20 for every dollar we invest. This summer, it supported festivals and events like the Ontario150 tour, which brought the world's largest rubber duck and other entertainment to five ports and a record 300,000 visitors, as well. Here's the breakdown: in Owen Sound, 40,000 visitors; in Sault Ste. Marie, 30,000; 85,000 to Midland, in the riding of the Leader of the Opposition; 80,000 to Amherstberg; and 55,000 to Brockville, with a total economic impact of \$11.2 million.

With these kinds of results and with a thriving tourism sector, we fully expect that our 2018 funding, which has a deadline of November 9, will be enthusiastically popular.

Speaker, the ill-informed attacks on the duck were misinformed and actually, in short, they were a total canard.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Premier. Across Ontario, small and rural town residents rely on their local community newspapers for information about their communities. For many of these local newspapers,

their business is moving into the digital marketplace. The Ontario Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit once provided small, local media companies with funds to help during this transition to the digital world. This government has cut that funding. Small local newspaper companies don't have large staff resources and could use the extra funds to assist with their digital transformations.

Speaker, will the government review the decision to cut this credit, and help small, local media companies?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you very much for the question from the honourable member opposite. Speaker, I think he knows, as well as we do, that we care a great deal about facts and the local media markets that support them. In particular, we consider the local newspaper sector, which we need to thrive, as incredibly important.

I'm glad that the member opposite has brought this to my attention. I look forward to speaking with him about it and having a conversation about how, working together, we can ensure that these local media markets thrive, because in today's information age in particular, it's really important that public life, and politicians in particular, have access to these local media markets so that people stay close to their government and understand how to unpack it and how it can make a difference in their everyday lives.

I thank him for the question, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Premier: Local newspapers are the lifeblood of small communities. They deliver news, sports scores, coming events, advertising and much more to their residents. The Ontario Community Newspapers Association reminds us that the rapid arrival of the digital age has left these small-town companies struggling to keep up. The Ontario Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit helped these companies deal with the new digital frontier.

Speaker, again, will this government reconsider the cut to this program and extend local newspapers an important lifeline?

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. The member opposite is making reference to tax credits that were actually something they asked us to cut when they told us to support Don Drummond and all of his recommendations.

We recognize the importance of providing tax credits on the digital media side for those very purposes for which they were intended, and that's what we're doing. I appreciate the concern because we all share the same concern about the effects this has on local media outlets. We want to encourage them to take advantage of the operations that are available to them, but it is going digital, and there are more and more news items that are going through alternate sources.

The member opposite sat in this House and asked us to make those cuts, and we took the precaution to ensure other services are available to those same media outlets.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Trinity–Spadina on a point of order.

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to introduce members of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects. In the members' gallery this morning is OALA president Doris Chee. She's joined by OALA executive director and a fellow constituent of mine, Aina Budrevics, and with them are Tim Dobson and Bruce Corban. I encourage all members to speak to them and learn about the good work that they've done across the province.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I apologize; when I was referencing the new acute beds, the 1,200 new ones province-wide, and when I was referencing the Welland site and their allocation, I erroneously said 26 new acute care beds. Their allocation, in fact, is 25 beds.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members are encouraged to correct their own records. Thank you.

DEFERRED VOTES

REPRESENTATION STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2017LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LA REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act to amend the Representation Act, 2015 and certain other Acts / Projet de loi 152, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2015 sur la représentation électorale et d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1158 to 1203.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On October 23, 2017, Mr. Naqvi moved third reading of Bill 152, An Act to amend the Representation Act, 2015 and certain other Acts.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Barrett, Toby
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael

Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie

Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Moridi, Reza
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Oosterhoff, Sam
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Qadri, Shafiq

Chiarelli, Bob
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy

Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McNaughton, Monte
Milczyn, Peter Z.

Rinaldi, Lou
Romano, Ross
Sandals, Liz
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiane
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 87; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1206 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to welcome to the Legislature today, in the members' gallery, Julian Markowitz, Robert Raskin and William Cohen. They're from the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity. It's the largest Jewish fraternity in Canada. We're commemorating Lord Balfour for the Balfour Declaration before the creation of the State of Israel.

Thank you for joining us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. We're glad you're with us.

Further introduction of guests? The member for Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I also want to welcome to the Legislature—they're not here yet, but they'll be here later. From the Child Welfare Political Action Committee Canada, we've got Meaghan Martin, Jane Kovarikova, Carleen and Christine.

Thank you, ladies, for all the advocacy work you're doing on behalf of youth after care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm here to pay tribute to a friend and constituent who passed away last month, Ross Skene—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Are we talking about a statement or an introduction?

Mr. Mike Colle: Oh, no, I was talking about—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We're still on introduction of guests. I haven't left that yet.

I will now do a last call for introduction of guests. Thank you.

It is now therefore—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm just finishing that, because I'm going to now recognize the President of the Treasury Board on a point of order.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

Hon. Liz Sandals: On a point of order: I would like to table the supplementary estimates for the year ending March 31, 2018, and recommend them to the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Administrator of the province of Ontario transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2018, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly. Dated Toronto, October 13, 2017.

VISITOR

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to introduce a friend of the Progressive Conservative caucus, Vijay Thanigasalam. He's here today from Scarborough–Rouge River. I'm told on good authority that former MP Pauline Browes sent him.

It's good to see you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. Now I will entertain members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. John Yakabuski: We will all recall the flooding that took place this spring along the watersheds of the Bonnechere, Madawaska and Ottawa Rivers. In fact, my riding was the first to be recognized for eligibility under the disaster recovery assistance program. While the program covers overland flooding, it does not cover erosion as a result of high water levels. The Indian and Muskrat Rivers experienced significant landslides as a result of the high water undermining their banks. The landslides resulted in some homes being condemned and many more being threatened.

Because the provincial program does not cover erosion, Minister Mauro directed us to apply to the federal National Disaster Mitigation Program. Working together with the landslide victims, the city of Pembroke and our federal member of Parliament, an application has been submitted. Both the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry have been most helpful in preparing this application. We're hopeful it will be successful—but if not, what then?

This problem requires more resources than either the homeowners or the city of Pembroke could possibly provide. It cannot be left unresolved. Further erosion would result in more people having to leave their homes or possibly even seeing them slide into the river.

While I appreciate the efforts of both Ministers Mauro and McGarry, we cannot forget these people and the threat they are facing. If this application is not successful, I do hope that the provincial government will find some way to help these people deal with the terrible situation they are facing.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I rise today in support of the striking faculty—part-time, sessional, contract and full-time—at our community colleges. This is a historic moment. It really is a watershed moment in post-secondary education because, if they do not get their demands met, we can look at the erosion and the privatization of our public school system at the post-secondary level.

Let me tell you what's at stake here: 81% of the teachers in our community colleges now are part-time, sessional or contract; only 19% are full-time faculty. Those part-time people, that 81%, most of them have no job security at all, many of them have no benefits and a lot of them make approximately minimum wage because they are paid only for the time in the classroom. Every teacher will tell you, especially at the post-secondary level, that's a very small portion of what their job actually entails. The difference would only be \$300 million for the college system, which, by the way, Mr. Speaker, is much less than they have in surplus, so they can afford equal pay for equal work.

By the way, this government is complicit, because the Ontario college council will not even meet—they won't even come to the table—with the strikers. Again, this government is complicit. If they support the principle of equal pay for equal work, they should support it for everyone, including their own employees.

UNITED WAY OF PEEL REGION

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Over 200 community leaders gathered at the Courtyard by Marriott in Brampton for the announcement of the United Way of Peel Region's Community Impact Report 2016/17. Sonia Boyle, vice-president of human resources at GE Canada, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the importance of mental health in the workplace.

During the event, United Way released its annual Community Impact Report that highlights where donor dollars were strategically invested last year in Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga to support those who are struggling. United Way of Peel Region also recognized outstanding partners and dedicated front-line social service staff at the meeting.

United Way of Peel Region also presented Suncor Energy and UPS Canada with the Thanks A Million Award. The Thanks A Million Award recognizes organizations that have raised \$1 million or more in support of the United Way in one campaign year.

A friend and active volunteer, Edna Toth, was presented with the Community Partner Award, the award that is presented to somebody that has led our community to

new levels of innovation impacting Peel. Edna is a tireless anti-poverty advocate.

The Bhayana Family Foundation Awards, made possible by the generous donation of Madan and Raksha Bhayana and the Bhayana Family Foundation, are peer-nominated awards that recognize extraordinary contributions made by staff at United Way funded agencies. The awards have also been given out in Toronto, Calgary, Lower Mainland and York region.

Some of the award winners are Soma Banerjee, Malton Neighbourhood Services; Godwin Darkwah, Knights Table; Jesse Murray, Nexus Youth Services; Debra Langleben, Hope 24/7; Alisha Denonanan, Knights Table; Nirlep Gill, Punjabi Community Health Services; Sangeeta Rina, Malton Neighbourhood Services; Amelia Torres, Vita Centre; and Raj Chandegra, United Way of Peel Region.

CHILD WELFARE

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm rising today to speak about the Child Welfare Political Action Committee. Today at Queen's Park we have a group, including two accomplished young ladies, Jane Kovarikova and Meaghan Martin. They are meeting with MPPs and their staff to advocate for better outcomes for youth in care. Included in the group are Paul Berendson, Carina Chan, Kristy Denette, Carleen Joseph, Amelia Merhar and Christine Bradley.

I just want to mention to everybody here that Jane and Meaghan overcame difficult childhoods, as did many of the others, and have joined forces as part of the Child Welfare PAC. They believe that an evidence-based and outcome-driven child welfare system is key to breaking the cycle and ensuring that kids succeed.

There was a recent study published that states that nearly three out of every five homeless youth were part of the child welfare system at some point in their lives, a rate almost 200 times greater than that of the general population. Of those with a history in the child welfare system, almost two of every five respondents eventually aged out of provincial or territorial care, losing access to the sort of support that could have kept them from becoming homeless, the study found. There are unintended consequences and bad outcomes when young people leave care.

I just want to thank the girls for coming to my office earlier. We had a very interesting discussion, and I really applaud all the work that they're doing.

1510

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. John Vanthof: As we are all aware, faculty at colleges across Ontario are on strike. The issues are fairly straightforward: The vast majority of the faculty are on a part-time, contract basis—81%—precarious, part-time work with no benefits. This situation is not conducive to long-term quality education results.

Our constituency offices have been contacted by students and their parents. They are worried about losing

their semesters and the funds that they have invested in this term, as well as the longer-term opportunity costs if the work stoppage drags on.

We have also been contacted by faculty, who want to do what they do best—teach—but they are under intense pressure because of their precarious work situation.

Emotions are running high and conditions could quickly deteriorate. I would like to make the Legislature aware that on Thursday, a worker manning a picket line in Timiskaming-Cochrane was struck by a vehicle, which did not stop. The worker was injured, and the OPP is continuing to investigate this incident.

The right to strike is an important tool in our collective bargaining process. It is stressful on all sides, but it should never resort to violence.

We urge the parties to get back to the bargaining table, and I implore the government to ensure that the funding is in place so that meaningful negotiations can be held, the ultimate goal being that students can continue to receive a quality education provided by faculty that are fairly paid for their work and skills.

ROSS SKENE

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to pay tribute to a constituent of mine, Ross Skene. Ross was a most talented actor, musician and music teacher. He and his wife, Glenda Skene, were responsible for saving a heritage apartment building in the Yonge-Lawrence area, 1 Cheritan Avenue, with their own hard work and dedication.

Ross was a protégé of one of Toronto's theatre greats, George Luscombe of Toronto Workshop Productions. He did every job at Toronto Workshop Productions and was an incredibly dedicated theatre person and, as I said, music teacher. He taught the guitar and drums for years, to countless young people in north Toronto.

He was an exceptional tenant advocate. He really was one of the champions of tenants' rights for many years in north Toronto. He was also involved with Neighbourhood Watch. He was constantly helping seniors to get their food and everything.

Ross was a real local giant. We're going to miss him. He really contributed above and beyond the call of duty to the city of Toronto and to all his friends and neighbours.

Rest in peace, Ross.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE CONVOCATIONS

Mr. Michael Harris: Today I stand to offer heartfelt congratulations to all those across Ontario who are taking part in fall convocation ceremonies at universities and colleges right across our province. Just like the bright colours beginning to turn in celebration of another season, convocation ceremonies mark the successful finale to an intense and sometimes difficult journey, as dedicated students look toward the next steps for a brighter future.

Given the significant challenges for many who are blessed with the opportunity to build their skills and knowledge through a post-secondary education, it is truly

a special and proud accomplishment to be able to step forward with a diploma or degree in hand on the convocation stage. Often those challenges can only be overcome through the ongoing sacrifice and backing of family, friends and colleagues providing an essential support network to help lift us to that next level, that next goal of graduation.

Speaker, again, I want to congratulate all who realized that goal this convocation season, and those who I was honoured to join at War Memorial Hall at the University of Guelph as we received our master's in leadership from the school of business and economics. I especially want to thank all of my MA classmates—and congratulate them, of course—with whom I had many late-night Skype chats for group assignments and other activities over the course of the two years. I want to thank our university professors and, of course, my family, my staff, friends and colleagues.

Speaker, learning is truly a lifelong journey, and I thank all of those who help us take those next steps.

LEGISLATION IN QUEBEC

Mr. John Fraser: Today, the government of Quebec is releasing its guidelines for Bill 62.

It's releasing these guidelines using security and communications as justification. Bill 62 violates the basic rights of Muslim women who wear the niqab or burka in Quebec. It is unacceptable that these women will be forced to choose between accessing important public services like health care, education and public transit and the freedom to express themselves. It is fundamentally wrong to violate their basic charter rights of freedom of expression and religion.

A dangerous slippery slope has been embarked upon, singling out women who are already vulnerable targets to bullying and xenophobia. It is a law that discriminates; it is a law that diminishes the right to freedom of expression and religion that we all cherish.

Last week, all members of this Legislature voted unanimously to condemn Bill 62. Our work is not done. We all must continue to speak out in this Legislature and in our communities against this legislation and all forms of discrimination.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Today I would like to share some messages that I received via postcards from people around the Walkerton community, including Mildmay, Formosa, Teeswater and Chepstow.

They came to me to talk about a portable housing benefit. A portable housing benefit would index rental cost to income to ensure that rent does not exceed 30% of OW/ODSP or the working poor's income. These postcards were forwarded on to me by the Walkerton and District Food Bank, and I think the messages were quite powerful.

Marita wrote: "People shouldn't have to choose between rent and food." Dorothy wrote that such a

benefit "would allow those needing affordable housing more resources for food, hydro, clothing, transportation and other necessities" and, most importantly, "more independence." Maryanne said: "In my work with the local food bank, I see people who are living in unaffordable housing which takes most of their income. Hence the need to use our food bank. A portable housing benefit would be great." Therese wrote that she "was a person many years ago who needed this program," and "It is a struggle!"

Speaker, I wanted to let the minister know that I will be sending the full package of postcards on to him, and I hope he will consider these people's messages when developing housing policy in Ontario.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to call upon the Minister of Economic Development and Growth for a point of order.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I just have a series of introductions, and I will go as quickly as I can, but I want to thank a number of guests who are here to hear a statement that we'll be making later on.

Jennifer Canham from the Weston foundation; Gloria Reszler from Friends of the Rouge Watershed; Gray Graffam, director of University of Toronto Scarborough Campus' The Hub; and a number of UTSC students: Kaitlyn Chow, Derek Etherton, Alex Cavanagh, Dayde Reid, Brian Au.

We also have Heather Rigby from Land Over Landings; Anna Baggio from Wildlands League; Peter Kendall from Earth Rangers; Boris Issaev from Parkbus initiative; and Serena and David Lawrie from Rouge Valley Foundation.

I hope I got them all, and I want to thank them for joining us today and for their very strong leadership.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. I'm glad you're with us.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 163, An Act to enact the Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, 2017 and to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in relation to abortion services / Projet de loi 163, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur l'accès sécuritaire aux services d'interruption volontaire de grossesse et modifiant la Loi sur l'accès à

l'information et la protection de la vie privée en ce qui a trait aux services d'interruption volontaire de grossesse.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 16, 2017, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK

Hon. Brad Duguid: In that long list of guests that I read out, there was one who showed up that I thought might come, but I didn't see her until I looked over here, and I see her. It's Pauline Browes, former MP from Scarborough Centre and a real champion for the Rouge. It's great to have you here, Pauline.

Located within Canada's most populated and culturally diverse metropolitan area, the greater Toronto area, the Rouge National Urban Park became Canada's first-ever national urban park on May 15, 2015. This incredible achievement is nearly 30 years in the making.

I was fortunate enough, back in 1990, to be here in this place, working under the David Peterson government that made the initial promise to save the Rouge Valley. Many of us—some of us, at least; not all of us here—in fact, not a lot of us here were here during those days, but I know Jim Bradley and Monte Kwinter were. I think they may be the only members who were existing members at that time.

It took sheer determination, passion and devotion from countless individuals and groups to make this a reality: to keep expanding the boundaries of the park; to ensure the ecological protection of this incredibly diverse natural area; and to protect large tracts of rare class 1 farmland, the richest, rarest and most fertile in Canada, and to ensure that our farmers that have been there for generations continue growing the food that we rely on.

This was really a team effort. I want to acknowledge the groups, some of whose representatives I have introduced today. I've got to tell members, it's a long list.

There's CPAWS Wildlands League, World Wildlife Fund Canada, Ontario Nature, the Weston foundation, ParticipACTION, the Greenbelt Foundation, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Parkbus, Earth Rangers, Across U-Hub, the Greenbelt Council, the Rouge Park Alliance, Altona Forest, Land Over Landings, 10,000 Trees for the Rouge, Toronto Wildlife Centre, Nature Canada, Canadian Wildlife Federation, Markham Historical Society, West Rouge Community Centre, Outward Bound, Rouge Valley Foundation, Green Durham and Park People, to name a few. And there's obviously the Save the Rouge Valley System and the Friends of the Rouge.

Mr. Speaker, that's a long list of volunteers, people and organizations that have played an important part in the establishment of this park. I bet you won't believe it, but I probably missed out others there as well.

I don't want to single out any individuals here today, but there are a few that I think need to be singled out: those that were there from the very beginning, that led the initial charge to protect the Rouge. One of them I've introduced already: Gloria Reszler. Her comrades, Jim Robb and Kevin O'Connor, weren't able to make it here, but I want them to be acknowledged as well. Others as well were involved with that original group that started this journey and I think ought to be acknowledged today.

These truly are the friends of the Rouge watershed. They were the folks that, in extreme resistance, never gave up on the dream of preserving the Rouge lands for future generations.

I also want to acknowledge a good friend, somebody who has had a long-standing commitment to the Rouge, and that's Councillor Glenn De Baeremacker. I think he should be acknowledged for his efforts as well.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes down to it, this is not only a personal fight for me but a personal fight for all of us in this chamber. I began working on this issue many years ago with community leaders, back in 1987, as a staffer for then-MPP Frank Faubert, another strong Rouge advocate. I've had the privilege of being a proud champion for the preservation of the Rouge ever since, and as such, I feel privileged to have made those contributions. But the true heroes are Jim, Gloria, Kevin and the hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers who have dedicated much of their lives to these efforts.

Our efforts have been well worth it. I think it's an exciting, lasting legacy for our kids and our grandkids, and for the future of our community, province, country and indeed our planet.

Members will recall our fight for strengthened federal legislation that made ecological integrity the primary consideration for any future decisions about the Rouge. They will recall as well that we refused to release our lands until that crucial condition was met. This was no easy fight, and we endured a lot of severe rhetoric during that time, but we stood our ground, and we have succeeded. On June 19, 2017, the Rouge national park act was amended to include ecological integrity as the first priority when managing the park.

I want to acknowledge, as well, the leadership of the federal government. The current federal government listened to our concerns and responded. I very much appreciate their commitment and I'm confident that the Rouge lands will now be in very good hands.

Rouge National Urban Park celebrates the diversity of the Rouge's natural and cultural landscapes, its unique urban setting, the presence of working farms in the park, and the opportunities for connection, stewardship, community engagement and volunteerism.

The park is home to amazing diversity, a rare Carolinian forest and geological rock formations from the interglacial age that are internationally significant. The

park is also the keeper of human history dating back more than 10,000 years, including some of Canada's oldest-known indigenous sites and travel routes.

Mr. Speaker, last Saturday we also launched a new app, free to download for everyone, that will be the definitive guide to the Rouge National Urban Park. In 2016, a collaboration with Parks Canada and a team of students at UTSC's entrepreneurial incubator known as "The Hub" began working on a standalone app to illuminate the wonders of Canada's first-ever national urban park. Those students are there here with us today, and I want to thank them for their leadership, ingenuity, creativity and entrepreneurship. It's really obvious the next generation is already stepping up to celebrate the treasures of the Rouge. I can't wait to check out this new app and take a walk through the Rouge with it.

Despite our success to date, it's also important to note that our work is not yet done. We have to continue to work together to ensure the ecological health of the Rouge is preserved. We may be passing on the custody of the Rouge park to Parks Canada, but the responsibility to ensure that the Rouge is protected and enhanced for future generations rests with each and every one of us in the province of Ontario.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have much to celebrate today. The Rouge National Urban Park is a triumph for each and every one of us. Today, it is a reality.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Hon. Michael Coteau: I rise today to recognize October as Child Abuse Prevention Month here in Ontario, and to help draw attention to the annual Purple Ribbon Campaign. This campaign encourages everyone to learn the signs of child abuse and neglect, and reminds us that we all have a duty—a legal duty—to report any cases that we know or suspect.

I want to thank the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, which is joining us here today. I know Christina Campbell is here with us. Thank you for being here, and to the Toronto Child Abuse Prevention Committee for the work that you do raising awareness. I also would like to recognize the Child Welfare Political Action Committee, who are joining us here in the Legislature today.

I also want to thank the members in the House today who are joining me in bringing awareness to a cause by dressing in purple or wearing a purple ribbon. A special thanks to my colleague Lou Rinaldi, the member from Northumberland—Quinte West, who last Thursday introduced a private member's bill that we hope will lead to Ontario formally recognizing October as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

We believe every child deserves a safe, loving and nurturing home. Sadly, not all children have one. To everyone gathered in the House today and to everyone here in the province, please hear this: If you suspect a child is abused or neglected, you must report it immediately to a children's aid society. You don't have to be

sure that a child is or may be in need of protection to make a report to a children's aid society. You only need reasonable grounds for your suspicion.

We often talk in generalities about something as troubling as child abuse, or we use symbols like purple ribbons to represent it, but sometimes it's necessary to describe exactly what it means when we talk about abuse, even though it's very difficult to hear, because in order to report it, we need to recognize abuse and the signs of abuse. Child abuse knows no boundaries. It can take many forms. It can be physical. It can be emotional. It can be sexual.

Physical abuse includes deliberate physical force or actions by a parent or a caregiver which results, or could result, in harm to a child. That can include bruising, cutting, punching, slapping, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. Using a belt, stick or other objects to punish a child that can cause serious harm and is also considered abuse here in Ontario.

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There's emotional abuse, a pattern of behaviour that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It can also include belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating a child. It may also include exposure to domestic violence.

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child.

Finally, abuse can take the form of neglect: the failure to provide a child with basic needs such as food, sleep, shelter, safety, clothing or medical treatment. It may also include leaving a child alone without providing for the child's care and custody.

Recent figures collected by UNICEF and the World Health Organization are quite distressing. One in five women and one in 13 men report having been sexually abused as a child, one quarter of all adults report having been physically abused as children, and almost one billion children on this planet are subject to physical punishment on a regular basis.

Children in Ontario are not exempt from these troubling statistics. Every year, children's aid societies across the province receive many reports of alleged abuse and neglect. Back in 2013, there were 43,000 cases of child abuse here in Ontario. This sobering reality is what drives our government to be there for children in need of protection. As part of Child Abuse Prevention Month, I'm calling on neighbours, colleagues, coaches, friends and professionals working with children to be vigilant and to report any reasonable suspicion you may have to a children's aid society.

We're also providing all MPPs with materials for their constituency offices. These materials should already be on their way to your offices. I encourage you to post them and to distribute them to members of your community.

Members of the public, including professionals who work with children and youth, can call their local children's aid society 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and can report in privacy. They can also visit the

Ministry of Children and Youth Services website at Ontario.ca/stopchildabuse for more information.

We also continue to fund the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies to train child protection staff so they can respond quickly to reports of suspected child abuse or neglect.

I want to thank all of our children's aid societies and indigenous well-being societies here in Ontario. I want to thank their board members, managers and compassionate staff, including the hard-working members who have joined us here today and who work to serve the 14,000 children and youth here in Ontario who are in need of protection. Thank you for making a huge difference in the lives of these children at risk.

Like children's aid societies, our government is committed to improving the lives of all young people in the province, including those receiving services from a children's aid society. Over the years, we've made many improvements to our child welfare system. Fewer children are coming into care. Many are being adopted into permanent homes. Youth leaving care have more support in their transition to adulthood, including counselling and financial support, to help them stay in school, complete post-secondary education and become better prepared for adulthood.

We've increased the accountability and transparency of Ontario's children's aid societies by publicly reporting performance indicators every year. Last July, we released Safe and Caring Places for Children and Youth, our new blueprint for building a system of licensed residential care here in the province. The blueprint is a multi-year plan for comprehensive reform to improve quality of care and enhance the oversight of services. It ensures that children and youth have a voice while in care.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to join the Minister of Education, Mitzie Hunter, as we announced new supports for youth in care to help them succeed in schools. We were in Hamilton.

Earlier this year, we took on what is perhaps the most comprehensive step of all by passing the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. This act provides a modern framework to strengthen the quality and oversight of a wide range of services funded, licensed or delivered by the ministry, including child welfare and licensed residential services.

When children are in care, they should feel safe. The places where they live should be welcoming and should meet their needs, and young people should have a say in the planning of their care. That is why this new legislation that was passed on June 1 builds on the goals of Katelynn's Principle by putting children at the centre of decision-making. It focuses on the voice, the opinions and the goals of children and youth themselves, not just the issues they face.

While these reforms are a big step forward, we know there's so much more work to do to improve the lives of vulnerable children and youth here in Ontario. It takes partnership and commitment and an open ear to children and youth and families who use child welfare services.

Our first priority is to support families in the home to prevent abuse or neglect from happening in the first place. That is why we're strengthening the focus on early intervention to prevent children and families from reaching crisis situations at home. It is crucial, since children and youth who leave home with nowhere to go are often left vulnerable to abuse.

Mr. Speaker, as an uncle and as the father of two young girls I'm especially troubled by the fact that many young girls here in Ontario end up being sexually exploited and used for sex trafficking. There's a common misconception that sex trafficking involves girls and women not from Ontario, but it's predominantly a home-grown problem affecting vulnerable girls right here in Ontario. These are girls as young as 14.

We need to remember that sex trafficking is a form of child abuse. By raising the age of protection from 16 to 18, the new legislation extends access to child protection services to all 16- and 17-year-olds so that youth in need of protection can access services to help them successfully transition into adulthood.

The goal of this policy includes reducing homelessness and better helping victims of human trafficking. The new legislation is also clear that systemic racism must continue to be addressed. We know that black children and youth are overrepresented in the child welfare system. This is one of the reasons why my ministry is supporting the implementation of the One Vision One Voice practice framework in children's aid societies across the province. This framework was co-developed by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies with leaders from the African Canadian community to support culturally appropriate service delivery for African Canadian children, youth and their families.

Indigenous children and youth are also overrepresented in the child welfare system. To help prevent crisis situations from arising—situations that often land children in care—we've launched the Family Well-Being Program to provide culturally appropriate support.

Indigenous child well-being societies play an important role in delivering culturally appropriate services to families in their communities. By investing in indigenous well-being societies, children and youth who receive child welfare services remain connected to their families, their communities and their culture.

My ministry will also be requiring that children's aid societies here in Ontario collect identity-based data and provide aggregate reports to us in the near future. With better information, we'll have a deeper understanding of children, youth and families receiving services. This will make a more inclusive, more culturally appropriate Ontario.

We know that we need to do better and that we need to continue to provide support for young people here in Ontario and to provide better support for our children's aid societies. That's why we're implementing the Child Protection Information Network, which modernizes and replaces the legacy information systems used by children's aid societies. The province's database will

enhance child safety by providing societies with the capacity to consistently track youth and children and their outcomes, as well as the ability to seamlessly transfer critical case-history information across societies.

We want to make sure that young people are set up for success here in the province of Ontario. We want to make sure that our children's aid societies have the best, most modern legislation that is in place to ensure they can reach that goal, and we want to make sure that we continuously bring those numbers down so we have fewer kids in care in Ontario.

I want to thank everyone here in the House for everything they do. We know that this should never be a partisan issue. I just want to thank all members in the House for the work they do every day to protect our most valuable asset here in the province: our children.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

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ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm glad to respond to the statement by the Minister of Economic Development and Growth and once again express our support for the establishment of the Rouge National Urban Park, which, when finished, will be the largest urban park in the world. From the spectacular shores of Lake Ontario to the protected areas of the Oak Ridges moraine, the Rouge National Urban Park will dwarf New York City's Central Park. It's going to be 23 times bigger.

In addition to continuing agriculture at the Rouge park, visitors will be able to enjoy our wonderful Canadian climate and landscape and to hike, cycle, swim and paddle and even camp overnight, all in a natural environment like no other.

I want to thank the Rouge National Park Friends, Friends of the Rouge Watershed, the Rouge Park Alliance, the Honourable Peter Kent, Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker, Alan Wells and Larry Noonan. I also want to thank the Honourable Pauline Browes for her tireless work as chair of the Friends of the Rouge National Urban Park. Pauline is here today.

My federal counterpart and friend Mike Chong has also been involved as part of the Rouge Park Alliance. I also want to acknowledge Vijay Thanigasalam for his support here today.

We salute the member for Scarborough–Rouge River for his years of active involvement in the Rouge Valley. Earlier this year, this member, along with the Friends of the Rouge Watershed, hosted their 25th annual tree planting event. Over the years, they've planted 40,000 trees. Well done, Raymond Cho.

All of us in this House must also recognize the contribution of First Nations, who are really the first Canadians and who continue to be the first conservationists of the Rouge Valley.

I listened to the Minister of Economic Development a few minutes ago energetically and enthusiastically

patting his government on the back. But he did not give a satisfactory explanation as to why the visionary idea of the Rouge National Urban Park had to become a political football. Simply put, why did it take this long? Why did this Liberal government make up excuses to renege on their January 2013 agreement to transfer the lands to Parks Canada? Was it because there was a federal election pending and the Liberal Party of Canada instructed their provincial counterparts to stop the progress towards the new park? Or was it because, at the same time, the provincial Liberals needed a fundraising issue at a time when the Premier had assigned her Liberal ministers a fundraising quota before that scandal broke?

Simply put, why is it continuing to take this long? Why did they announce on Saturday the transfer of only 6.5 square kilometres and postpone the formal transfer of the remaining 15 square kilometres where there's a provincial interest? Is it because they want to have one more good-news announcement just before the next provincial election? And is this just one more example of how this Liberal government puts its own political self-interest ahead of all other considerations, including the public interest that they purport to serve?

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm here to speak on Child Abuse Prevention Month. Every October, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies raises awareness about ways to identify and help prevent child abuse. We're wearing purple today as part of the campaign. One of the campaign's key goals is to educate communities and key partners about the power of calling children's aid societies. It is one of the most effective ways to help vulnerable children in our communities.

For this campaign, OACAS and member CASs work closely with school boards, schools and community partners on a provincial Dress Purple Day. This is why so many of us here in the Legislature are wearing purple today.

One of the great parts about this campaign is that they focus on educating both children and adults. People can't report abuse or neglect if they don't know what it looks like.

We need to also recognize that kids really do best with their families and focus on mentorship programs that can help guide families on topics such as getting the right babysitter, what is considered neglect, and the liability of reporting. These are just some of the keys to building healthier communities.

The most important message to take away from this campaign is that it is our duty to notify our children's aid societies if we have even the slightest suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected. It is not necessary that you be absolutely certain; it just means that you think that there could be a possibility that the child may need protection. You should make a report to a CAS.

A child would count as anyone who appears to be under the age of 16. Again, you don't have to know that

for a fact. It also applies to children already under a child protection order who are 16 or 17 years old.

We must also remember that the duty to report is ongoing. Even if you know that a report has already been made, you can make a further report to a CAS if there are reasonable grounds.

We all need to do our part. After all, we all know it takes a village to raise a child and it takes a community to raise healthy children.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of my leader, Andrea Horwath, and the NDP caucus to recognize Child Abuse Prevention Month. We're all familiar with the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." I don't know when that saying originated. Maybe it was many years ago, when people lived in villages, or perhaps it was more recently, when people thought nostalgically of villages as the only place where true community spirit could thrive.

I don't believe that, Speaker, because I see tremendous community spirit everywhere I go in my community, the large urban area of Hamilton. I see it in the way people come together to support others in need. I see it in people who choose to work for lower pay because they want to do right by others. I see it in the many who volunteer their own time with various community groups. These are people taking responsibility for what they see around them, and that is what Child Abuse Prevention Month is about. It is about raising awareness of our responsibility to speak out when we suspect abuse is happening, so that, as a modern-day village, we can respond and provide the safety and support that every child needs to thrive, the support that every child deserves.

Earlier this year, we had a lengthy discussion when we considered the new Child, Youth and Family Services Act. We talked about the need for children to be heard and to be consulted on all decisions affecting them. We talked about the strength of families and the extensive benefits of providing supports so that families in trouble could stay together. We must all understand that that discussion is far from finished. We still have a long way to go.

The over-representation of aboriginal children and African Canadian children is the most glaring example and it is a sad indictment of our child welfare system. It cannot be allowed to continue. We have must look to those children and youth, those families, those communities and those villages that it takes to raise a child for their wisdom and their advice on how we do that. We must provide the supports to get us there.

ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I join others today in celebrating this next step, this large step, in completion of the Rouge National Urban Park. The Minister of Economic Development and Growth and the member for

Wellington-Halton Hills listed at length those who contributed to this effort, this achievement. I would just like to add the name of Lois James to those who are thanked today. For those who haven't met Lois, my experience in the past was that Lois would ask me how I was after she asked me what was happening with the park, just so you understand her priorities.

The persistence and vision of those community activists, environmental activists and environmental groups were critical, key and central to this project moving forward. Not to take away from any government or government agency that helped, it was the people on the ground and the people concerned about the environment who gave the political push to make this happen, and they deserve an awful lot of credit.

I want to take this opportunity to ask that Ontario take strong action to curb sprawl and protect more of the land in and adjacent to the greenbelt. Southern Ontario is biologically rich and, in part, that's why the Rouge park is such a gem. We should celebrate the park but we should commit to preserving our biological wealth by curbing sprawl and taking the spirit of making this park happen and spreading it further in Ontario.

PETITIONS

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank Rebecca Shams and Alexis Wharton for meeting with me in my constituency office and providing this petition. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas:

"—In the past 10 years in Ontario, 86% of all movies with on-screen smoking were rated for youth;

"—The tobacco industry has a long, well-documented history of promoting tobacco use on-screen;

"—A scientific report released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that 185,000 children in Ontario today will be recruited to smoking by exposure to on-screen smoking;

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"—More than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related cancers, strokes, heart disease and emphysema, incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and whereas an adult rating (18A) for movies that promote on-screen tobacco in Ontario would save at least 30,000 lives and half a billion health care dollars;

"—The Ontario government has a stated goal to achieve the lowest smoking rates in Canada;

"—79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A (increased from 73% in 2011);

"—The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act via cabinet;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“—To request the Standing Committee on Government Agencies examine the ways in which the regulations of the Film Classification Act could be amended to reduce smoking in youth-rated films released in Ontario;

“—That the committee report back on its findings to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and that the Minister of Government and Consumer Services prepare a response.”

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support of the petition and I'll send it to the table with page Ryan.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: This makes 20,000 signatures on this petition that comes from all over Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas quality care for the 77,000 residents of long-term-care (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families;

“Whereas over the last 10 years 50% of Ontario's hospital-based complex continuing care beds have been closed by the provincial government; and, there has been a 29.7% increase in the acuity level...;

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in long-term-care homes keeps pace with residents' increasing acuity and a growing number of residents with complex behaviours...;

“Whereas there is extensive evidence that a care standard can result in increased staff levels, which translates into improved quality of care for residents;

“Whereas for over a decade several Ontario coroner's inquests into nursing deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents...;

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal government first promised a legislated care standard for residents ... in 2003 but in 2017 they have yet to make good on their promise;

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) empowers the provincial government to create a minimum standard—but falls short of actually creating one:... ”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“(1) An amendment must be made to the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) for a legislated care standard of a minimum four hours per resident each day adjusted for acuity level and case mix;

“(2) The province must increase funding in order for long-term-care homes to achieve a staffing and care standard and tie public funding for homes to the provision of quality care...;

“(3) To ensure accountability the province must make public reporting of staffing levels at each Ontario LTC home mandatory;

“(4) The province must immediately provide funding for specialized facilities for persons with cognitive impairment who have been assessed as potentially aggressive...;

“(5) The province must stop closing complex continuing care beds and alternative-level-of-care beds to end the downloading of hospital patients with complex medical conditions to long-term-care homes.”

I fully support this very long petition, will affix my name to it and ask my page Colin to bring it to the Clerk.

ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we've seen rapid growth of vertical communities across Ontario; and

“Whereas elevators are an important amenity for a resident of a high-rise residential building; and

“Whereas ensuring basic mobility and standards of living for residents remain top priority; and

“Whereas the unreasonable delay of repairs for elevator services across Ontario is a concern for residents of high-rise buildings resulting in constant breakdowns, mechanical failures and ‘out of service’ notices for unspecified amounts of time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Urge the Ontario Legislature to support Bill 109, the Reliable Elevators Act, 2017, that requires the repairs of elevators to be completed within a reasonable and prescribed time frame. We urge the Legislature to address these concerns that are shared by residents of Trinity–Spadina and across Ontario.”

I agree with this petition. I affix my name to it and will give it to page Swetlana.

ABORTION FACILITY LEGISLATION

Mr. Jack MacLaren: This petition was delivered to my office by people from the Campaign Life Coalition.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to Vote Against Abortion Facility ‘Bubble Zone’ Legislation.

“Whereas MPP Yasir Naqvi, the Attorney General of Ontario, plans to introduce ‘bubble zone’ legislation that prohibits pro-life sidewalk counsellors and any form of pro-life expression from coming within a certain distance of Ontario abortion facilities, including public sidewalks; and

“Whereas this is an infringement of Canadians' fundamental rights under section 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which states: ‘2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (d) freedom of association’; and

“Whereas thousands of cases of Canadian women who changed their minds about abortion after speaking to pro-lifers or taking literature during peaceful demonstrations, and who expressed gratitude, is proof that pro-life infor-

mation is desired and appreciated by many women entering these facilities; and

"Whereas the presence and conduct of pro-lifers at abortion facilities is peaceful, prayerful, and the ability of 'customers' to enter the abortion business is not obstructed; and

"Whereas laws already exist to prohibit violent or abusive behavior in public spaces, this new legal restriction would not only violate charter rights, it would also be unnecessary and redundant;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose the Liberal government's plan to transform public sidewalks into 'no free speech zones.'"

Mr. Speaker, there are 200 signatures here. I agree with this petition, affix my signature and give it to page Max.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I want to thank Grace Welch, the chair of the advocacy committee for the Champlain Region Family Council Network, for forwarding these petitions to me that are from throughout the Champlain LHIN.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas chronic understaffing is the number one concern of families and friends of residents in long-term care;

"Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) empowers the provincial government to create a minimum care standard—but falls short of actually creating one;

"Whereas current care levels fail to recognize the increased levels of sickness and rates of Alzheimer's and dementia of LTC residents;

"Whereas the most detailed and reputable studies of minimum care standards recommend at least four (4) hours of direct care per day;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"(1) Amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) so that a long-term-care home will have to provide its residents with a minimum of four hours a day of nursing and personal support services, averaged across the residents;

"(2) Calculate the average number of direct hours of nursing services and personal support services as prescribed by the regulations and exclude hours paid in respect to vacation, statutory holidays, sick leave, leaves of absences and training time;

"(3) Increase funding to long-term-care homes so they can achieve the mandated staffing and care standard and tie public funding for them to the provision of quality care and staffing levels that meet the legislated minimum care standard;

"(4) Make public reporting of staffing levels at each Ontario LTC home mandatory to ensure accountability."

Speaker, I affix my signature to it and send it down to the table with page Ryan.

PHARMACARE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to present this petition entitled "Universal Pharmacare for All Ontarians."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care, and people shouldn't have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need;

"Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don't have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don't take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost;

"Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and

"Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians."

I support the petition, affix my name and send it to the Clerks' table via page Payton.

1600

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: "To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas podiatrists treat foot pain and deformities in women twice as often as foot disabilities in men, often due to having to wear high heels in their workplaces;

"Whereas Ontario podiatrists see far too many patients with injuries in the workplace that are entirely avoidable and are caused by wearing footwear that is inappropriate or outright unsafe;

"Whereas clinical evidence demonstrates that wearing high-heeled shoes causes a much higher incidence of bunions, musculoskeletal pain and injury in people who wear high-heeled shoes than those who do not wear high heels;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To put their best foot forward, and take swift action to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers from dress codes that mandate unsafe footwear in the workplace."

I certainly agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to Matthew.

ROAD SAFETY

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it's on towing safety and incident management.

"Whereas tow truck operators provide an important service across Ontario's road network; and

"Whereas recent legislation has brought significant change to Ontario's towing industry; and

"Whereas motorists deserve reliable, timely service from their provider of choice across Ontario; and

"Whereas towing operators deserve a safe place to work in urban and rural communities across Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To further recent legislative amendments that ensure the safety of tow truck operators through section 159 of the Highway Traffic Act;

"To protect motorists and towing companies providing important services by addressing issues around highway incident management;

"To support the Transportation Systems Improvement Advisory Committee Act, 2017, which would analyze highway incident management and ultimately enable a comprehensive program for the improvement of highway incident management; and

"To include incident scene management in regulations to address the potential for improper actions on scene."

Of course I am very pleased to affix my signature.

ENERGY POLICIES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Arthur Schmitt from Lively in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

"Fix hydro now.

"Whereas hydro bills in Ontario have become unaffordable for too many people, and that reducing hydro bills by up to 30% for families and businesses is an ambitious but realistic target; and

"Whereas the only way to fix the hydro system is to address the root causes of high prices including privatization, excessive profit margins, oversupply and more; and

"Whereas Ontario families should not have to pay time-of-use premiums, and those living in a rural or northern region should not have to pay higher, punitive, delivery charges; and

"Whereas returning Hydro One to public ownership would deliver over \$7 billion back to the province and the people of Ontario";

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To "express our support for reducing hydro bills for businesses and families by up to 30%, eliminating mandatory time-of-use, ending unfair rural delivery costs, and restoring public ownership of Hydro One."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask my good page Airika to carry it.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. James J. Bradley: I've been asked by Amy DSouza of Burlington to submit this petition. I see I'm almost out of time, so I'll read the "We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows" part:

"1. Reverse the closure decisions for all schools where those decisions were made after September 1, 2016;

"2. Provide fair and equitable pupil accommodation review processes that school boards must follow, recognising the unique needs of rural and northern communities;

"3. Review the current funding formula with a goal of developing fair and equitable funding formulae for all rural, northern and urban schools."

I see I'm just out of time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): You can finish it if—you're all good? All right.

It would appear as though the time for petitions has now expired.

Orders of the day.

OPPOSITION DAY

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Patrick Brown: I move that whereas the Auditor General revealed that the government's fair hydro plan could cost Ontarians up to \$4 billion more than necessary;

Whereas the government passed legislation to make their own accounting rules that serve to dilute the impact of their financial decisions;

Whereas the government's intention in creating the accounting and financing design to handle the costs of the electricity rate reduction was to avoid affecting its fiscal plan;

Whereas the government should have recorded the true financial impact of the fair hydro plan's electricity rate reduction on the province's budget and consolidated financial statements; and

Whereas the government should have used a financing structure to fund the rate reduction that is the least costly for Ontarians;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls on the Liberal government to issue an apology to the Auditor General and the people of Ontario.

This is addressed to the Premier.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to Mr. Brown.

Mr. Patrick Brown: It's a pleasure today to rise in the Legislature in support of this Ontario PC opposition day motion. Today we are asking the government to apologize to the people of Ontario for their unfair hydro plan.

Last week, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk revealed that the Wynne Liberals hid the cost of its unfair hydro plan from the taxpayers. Thanks to Liberal accounting, Ontarians will be on the hook for \$4 billion more than necessary as part of this hydro cover-up. This is on top of the independent financial officer highlighting that future generations could be on the hook for as much as \$93 billion for this scheme.

This was never a credible plan to make hydro more affordable. It was about one thing and only one thing, and that's a re-election attempt by the government. It proves yet again that the only thing the Liberals are thinking about are themselves.

Sadly, this isn't the first time that we have seen the Liberals' contempt for the people of Ontario. Every decision this government has made during their time in office hasn't been about making life easier for families. After 14 years, it has always been about the Liberal Party of Ontario. After 14 long years, Ontario families are reeling from high electricity costs. We have gone from having competitive rates to being a laughingstock on hydro policy within Canada. Ontario has the fastest-growing electricity prices in the country.

Just yesterday, I was at a farm in St. Isidore, in the Glengarry–Prescott–Russell area, and a farmer there told me that his electricity bills were so unaffordable that he had to invest \$50,000 in co-generation to bring down these costs. He said, "We had no other option," and that this government hydro fiasco had just hurt their bottom line too much.

Every day, Ontario families, farms and businesses are paying more because of the worst mismanagement of the energy file that our province has ever seen. This mismanagement includes the global adjustment fee—or should we name it the Liberal disaster fee? This is a fee that has crippled the finances of Ontario families.

The Liberals cannot be trusted to fix this. They simply have turned a blind eye on a problem they have created. Two years ago, the Auditor General said that ratepayers forked out \$37 billion more than necessary between 2006 and 2014 and will pay a whopping \$133 billion by 2032 for the Liberal disaster fee.

What did we get? We got overpriced, expensive wind and solar power as part of the Liberal green energy debacle that was rolled out with no business plan—a debacle that the Ontario PC Party voted against.

What did the Liberals get, Mr. Speaker? The Liberal Party received \$1.3 million in donations from these companies.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That's scandalous.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Scandalous and astonishing. Meanwhile, a recent study shows that the Liberal's green energy debacle has cost the province more than 74,000 manufacturing jobs.

Do we even need this excess, expensive power? No. The Liberals wasted nearly \$1 billion in terms of clean electricity last year alone. We could have powered 500,000 homes just with the water power we've spilled.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Shameful.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, it's shameful. On top of that, the Wynne Liberals have created a secret millionaires' club at Hydro One, including paying the CEO over \$400 million, when in Quebec it's one tenth that price. It's not competitive with any other province in Canada. Then they allowed Hydro One to spend \$7 billion of ratepayer funds to purchase an American coal-burning utility. Unbelievable.

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They've tried to pull the wool over our eyes about their hydro scheme and their election ploy by promoting it on TV with taxpayer-funded ads. The problem is, these ads cost \$5.5 million—\$5.5 million that could have gone to reducing people's hydro bills. Instead, once again, it's always about what's in the best interests of the Liberal Party, not what's in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

In case that isn't enough to have your stomach churn, a leaked Liberal cabinet document shows that hydro rates will rise to the highest levels we've ever seen in Ontario history after the next election.

This is the short list, but it's clear that a billion dollars wasted here and a billion dollars wasted there is nothing to this government. They seem oblivious to waste of this size. It's difficult to comprehend that they could be so insensitive to the plight of Ontario families who simply can't afford—frankly, in some cases, they have to choose between paying their hydro bill or putting food on the table. After 14 years, they've lost the ability to distinguish between the public interest and the Liberal Party's interests, and they've failed miserably to get hydro rates under control.

Mr. Speaker, with the Auditor General's explosive report last week, the Liberal government has taken it to a new low. She concluded that senior officials ignored the government's own policy for preparing financial statements. What's more, she said the Canadian public sector accountability standards are the standard for all federal and provincial governments of Canada and that the Liberal government has brushed those standards aside. One rule for the rest of the country, the federal government—it has always been the case—and yet in Ontario they're making up their own rules. In fact, she said, "In essence, the government is making up its own accounting rules."

Mr. Jim Wilson: Pretty strong language.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Very strong language.

Why did the Liberals create this unnecessarily complex financial structure? It was to hide the true cost of their hydro scheme and keep it off the provincial books. To put it more bluntly, the government is once again cooking the books.

The Wynne Liberals' reaction? They attacked the credibility of the Auditor General. It's unbelievable. You've got an independent legislative officer, and you have ministers disparaging and attacking the Auditor General. They stonewalled access to hundreds of thousands of documents and slandered the auditor to journalists the day before the report came out, claiming the auditor's interpretation is flawed.

Do I trust the Liberal minister or do I trust the Auditor General? Ten times out of 10, I'm with the Auditor General.

This speaks volumes to the lengths that the Liberals will go to cling to power. After 14 years, they'll say anything and do anything to get re-elected.

In the real world of ordinary people, when you break the rules, there are consequences, and those responsible

should be held accountable. We do not have to accept political corruption as a matter of course in Ontario.

We in the Ontario PC Party don't take the Auditor General's report lightly. Tomorrow at the public accounts committee the member from Nepean–Carleton has a motion to comprehensively study the Auditor General's report. Her motion also calls on the energy minister and senior political staff to testify at public accounts. For the sake of transparency and parliamentary duty, I hope the Liberal MPPs in the committee vote in favour. It would be the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I've also made some very specific requests. First, I've called on the Information and Privacy Commissioner to investigate why the Liberal government refused to hand over millions of emails and correspondence to the Auditor General.

Second, I've called on the Independent Electricity System Operator to appear before committee to provide insight into the Liberals making up their own accounting rules. The motion will be debated this Thursday, and I hope for the sake of transparency and parliamentary duty the Liberals in that committee will vote in favour.

Finally, to avoid yet another cover-up scandal, we've asked the secretary of cabinet to ensure that all emails and documents on this matter are preserved and not deleted by Liberal staff.

Finally, today, Mr. Speaker, the Ontario PC caucus is making a clear and simple request as part of our opposition day motion. We ask Liberal MPPs in the Legislature to take responsibility, do the right thing and apologize to the Auditor General and the people of Ontario for engaging in improper accounting practices; apologize for wasting four billion hard-earned taxpayer dollars and sticking the bill on current and future generations. If anything warrants an apology, it's that. By agreeing, Liberal MPPs in the Legislature will show the people of Ontario that they are more than just part of a politically corrupt, morally bankrupt government. That is what I hope this vote this afternoon will show. Support this motion and issue an apology to the hard-working Ontario families. It's the right thing to do, and I hope every member of the Legislature can support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents in Windsor West, and the NDP caucus, to talk about the motion that is before us, brought forward by the Conservatives.

This is certainly supportable. We know that the practices from the Liberal side when it comes to our hydro sector and how they are reporting that are questionable, to put it lightly. I certainly agree that the people of the province deserve an apology from this government for the fact that they went and privatized our hydro system when the majority of people in this province were opposed to it. In fact, they could have had a referendum. They could have put it to the people of Ontario, but they didn't because they knew that the majority of people in this province were against the privatization of our hydro system.

There has been no apology from the Liberal side for saying that they campaigned on selling the hydro asset when in fact they didn't. There has been no apology for that. So I agree with this motion, that they should have to apologize to the people of this province for the way that they have conducted themselves, not just within the hydro sector but, frankly, in the last 14 years of their government.

I agree that they should apologize to the Auditor General. This is not the first time they have tried to dispute what the Auditor General has said. They tried to dispute what the FAO says. Any time any of our independent officers of the Legislature come out and say anything that is contradictory to the message that the Liberals want to get out to voters, they try to discredit those professionals. Certainly, I support them apologizing to the Auditor General as well.

Where I have issues with this motion is not the motion itself; it's the party that has brought this motion forward.

In our caucus, the NDP caucus, we frankly think that the leader of the Conservatives should apologize to the people of this province for the fact that he continually changes his opinion on issues, depending on who he's talking to, what day of the week it is, what the issue is. Nobody really knows what the leader of the PCs stands for or what his caucus stands for.

The proof of that is the fact—well, I stood up in September, I believe, of last year and then October of last year, speaking to some of the motions that they brought forward about hydro, and I highlighted all kinds of things in these. But what was highlighted mostly was—and I'm not holding it up as a prop. I'm holding up the PC white paper that is entitled *Paths to Prosperity*, which is actually a document they brought forward in 2012 and that they campaigned on in 2014.

I know they want to say that they're a different party. I know that they're going to tell you that what was in this white paper was the fact that they actually wanted to privatize our hydro system as well. I know that they're going to say, "That doesn't matter anymore. We didn't really mean that. We campaigned on it. We didn't really mean it. We're a new party." I will point out that the member—I want to get his riding right—from Nipissing actually, in this document on the energy file, has his picture endorsing their plan, the Conservative plan, to privatize our hydro system.

I think that the Conservatives should really have to apologize to the people of this province for saying that they don't support the sell-off of the hydro system, that they don't support the privatization, when in fact they started the process. They started it. It was a PC government that started the privatization of the system.

What is interesting, though, is that it was a Liberal Premier, Premier McGuinty, who said, "Absolutely not," and that it would be a bad idea for the people of this province, to privatize hydro. And yet, the Liberals went ahead and did it anyway.

So people are wondering, what is the difference between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party when they each are keen on privatizing our public assets?

1620

There are numerous articles online at the website summitt.ca, Summitt Energy—it was actually in the Windsor Star; it was called “Hydro’s Future.” The date was May 18, 2012. It was an article in my local paper.

This is what then-leader Tim Hudak said, and keep in mind that many of the members in the PC caucus today were members of the PC caucus then. This is what their leader said then; this is what they were campaigning on: “Why not, he said, sell off parts of Hydro One and the OPG?”—

Interjections.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Wait, it gets better: “Wouldn’t getting rid of that nasty albatross help keep electricity prices in check?”

The people of this province deserve to know how the Conservatives really feel. We got a little taste of that; I believe it was last week. We got a little taste of how the Conservatives really feel about what is going on in hydro, how they feel about the Liberal hydro scheme. I know they want them to apologize for what they are doing and what they’ve already done; I get that.

I believe it was last week that their critic for energy stood up. The member for Prince Edward–Hastings actually did an interview with the media and stated that the Conservatives wouldn’t change a thing; they would leave it exactly the way the Liberals have done it. That is the only plan that they have come forward with. That is the only plan for hydro, with this current leader, that they have come forward with.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That they’re going to be Liberals.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Their plan is to be Liberals and Liberals to be Conservatives. It’s one big happy family between those two parties.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It’s a big tent.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It’s a big tent.

The people of this province deserve to know that when a party like the Conservatives are going after a party like the Liberals, who should be apologizing to the people of this province for saying one thing and doing another and for misleading them. They do owe the people of this province an apology for using their funds in a manner that should not be used that way. When we are seeing cuts to health care and cuts to our education system, when you are seeing so many people in this province struggling to make ends meet and to pay their hydro bills, this government owes them an apology.

Really, the Conservatives have not a single leg to stand on when it comes to criticizing the Liberal side of the House on how they have handled the hydro file. One might ask themselves: Since the leader of the Conservatives and the entire party flip-flopped on the hydro issue on a regular basis, since they have not come forward with a plan to actually address the issue with our hydro system now that it’s been privatized, since they have no real plan to lower energy bills for the people of this province, and people want to know what they stand for—the only thing that the Conservatives have finally come out and said is that they would do nothing different than what the Liberals have done.

For that alone, the Conservatives who want to say they oppose the privatization of our hydro system, that they oppose what the Liberals are doing, the fact that they are hiding their own feelings—what they really stand for—from the people of this province, they too should be standing up and apologizing to the people of Ontario, because they are misleading them every step of the way. They are consistently flip-flopping except for that one little slip.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): On a point of order, I recognize the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: We recognize the willingness of members to debate enthusiastically in this, but this is the second time the member has used an unparliamentarily word that the Speakers traditionally disallow.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All right. Thank you.

To the member: I am listening very carefully, and there is a very fine line, so I would ask that you be very careful with the terminology that you use.

I will turn it back over to you now.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. I will be careful to choose my words wisely.

It’s interesting that a Liberal got up to defend the Conservatives, though. I guess that shows they are really one big happy family.

Interjections.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: That’s okay. After the next election, we’ll take that side of the House, and the Conservatives and the Liberals can get comfy over here.

Anyway, the point here that I’m making is this: While this motion is a valid motion, while I agree with it, that the Liberal government owes the people of this province an apology for what they have done to our hydro system, the fact that they forged ahead with privatization, the fact that the cost of hydro has become out of reach for so many people in the province—I couldn’t imagine. I live in southern Ontario, the sunny south. I couldn’t imagine what winter is like in the northern ridings for people who have to count on electricity to heat their homes.

This is the result of decisions made by the Liberal government, decisions that the people of this province did not support. They still oppose the fact that this government forged ahead with privatizing our hydro system. I think it’s interesting, too, because the former leader of the PCs—again, I want to point out, many of the people still in the PC caucus campaigned on this. They campaigned on the white paper. But their former leader actually made comments stating that he believed that privatizing the system would drive down the cost of hydro. He actually thought that privatizing would drive down the cost of hydro, and the Liberals have proved him wrong.

It’s not the first time that the Liberals tried to privatize our hydro system. It’s not the first time the Conservatives tried either. The Liberals have finally managed to ruin our public hydro system here in the province of Ontario,

and the people in this province are paying the price in a very serious and very dire way.

Speaker, I don't even know—I've got so many quotes here from the Conservatives, who apparently either have no plan or don't want to expose what that plan is for whatever reason. Maybe they're going to be like the Liberals. Maybe going into this election they think, "We're going to hide what our plan is; we're not going to let anybody know what our plan is. And then, after the election, we can sell off what's left of our public asset and say, 'Well, we campaigned on it. We were clear what we meant,'" which is what the Liberals have done. Maybe that's what the Conservatives are going to do.

But people really aren't clear, because as I said, their opinions, their thoughts and their policies, if they have policies at this point—I mean, we've seen what they have going to convention and their resolutions are vague, at best. I think that if people were to go online—it is available online. You don't even have to type in "Paths to Prosperity"; type in "PC white paper." There's all kinds of reporting on it. You can print off a copy yourself, if you want some light reading at bedtime. But I think that essentially, when the PC energy critic, the member from Prince Edward-Hastings, made his comments to the media that they have no intention—the PC plan, the Conservative plan is that they have no intention to change anything that the Liberals have done.

That would beg the question: What length would they go to in order to keep going down the path that the Liberals have? What would they do? At what point would it be, then, a member of the Liberal caucus or the NDP caucus standing up and tabling a motion just like this, asking the PCs to apologize to the people of the province? I know that's a big concern for my constituents, the fact that they don't know what the Conservatives stand for, that if they were to form government, they would do something very similar to what the Liberals have done, they would go to the same lengths that the Liberals would in order to justify or—I'm trying to think of a word; the leader of the PCs has said "hide" and "cook the books" and that kind of thing. I think that the PCs have shown that it's something they would be open to as well.

Speaker, we know one thing for certain: All you have to do is go back and look at the voting records of the parties in this House. All you have to do—it's in Hansard; it's the official record of the House. All you have to do is Google the NDP's policy on hydro and how we feel about the privatization of hydro. We are, New Democrats, the only party—not Liberals, not Conservatives; New Democrats are the only party who have consistently opposed the privatization of our public hydro system. We are the only party—and you can go online and find it—that has a plan to actually address the crisis that we have currently in our now-privatized hydro system. Part of that plan is to return it back to public ownership. Because while the Liberals and the Conservatives have both talked about broadening ownership and that kind of language, there is no broader ownership than

when every single person in this province owns a stake in it. There is no broader ownership than public ownership. So we would return hydro back to public hands, and we would work, through having public ownership, to bring down the cost of hydro rates immediately. We would take the money that's generated by that public asset, put it back into infrastructure, put it back into our schools and put it back into our hospitals. We would do the exact opposite to what the Liberals and the Conservatives would do.

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Again, Speaker, I agree with the motion before us, but I think the Conservatives also owe the people of this province an apology for not being clear on what their plan is or possibly not even having a plan at all, except to continue what the Liberals are doing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, if there is a recurring comment that people make to me about the Conservatives in Ontario and their leader, it is a question that asks, what world do the Conservatives think that they're living in? Certainly, in listening to the leader of the Progressive Conservatives talk about his own motion—he didn't even talk about his own motion.

We can accept that the best predictor of what you will do in the future is what you did in the past. Today's opposition day motion is just one more such example of how you can never, ever believe a thing Conservatives say, but you have to pay attention to what they do, because what they say and what they do are completely different things, separated by a gulf that that party has never crossed.

Let's begin with a Leader of the Opposition whose statements on energy have been consistently inaccurate despite being sent the facts ever since he entered this Legislature. Now, Speaker, the Conservatives are entitled to their opinion, which, by the way, Ontarians have never been able to decipher. But when they were in office for eight years, between 1995 and 2003, our urban air became progressively more polluted as Conservatives forced more coal-burning electricity onto the Ontario grid.

Conservative electricity policy has always had four pillars, all of which are reflected in today's opposition day motion.

The first pillar of Conservative energy policy is to do absolutely nothing in energy: Run the system into the ground, and don't spend any money renewing it. This is exactly what they did in government, and now we know the cost to play catch-up and to protect the ability of Ontarians to even have electricity. We know what that cost is: It's some \$50 billion. It's the money that Ontario has spent in the last dozen or so years in new and renewed transmission and power generation.

The second pillar of Conservative energy policy is to burn coal and to burn gas. Now that Ontario has stopped burning coal for a few years and smog days have decreased from 50 per year to zero, we can determine the

savings, something the Tories don't ever talk about in this motion and never talk about with Ontarians. Those savings are more than \$4 billion a year in money Ontario saves in health care, with fewer kids with puffers, fewer adults and seniors with respiratory problems, and fewer Ontarians dying unnecessary, premature and preventable deaths.

The third pillar in Conservative energy policy is to buy expensive US power on the spot market when Ontario is short of electricity. Ontario was a net electricity importer the last time the Conservatives governed our province. They were spending as much as a billion dollars a year buying coal-fired electricity from the Ohio Valley—so much for any allusion to fiscal management made or even implied in this opposition day motion. Today, Ontario is a net power exporter. Each year for more than the last six years, Ontario now earns between a quarter and a third of a billion dollars from net sales of electricity to our neighbours: Quebec, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Manitoba. But of course, the Tories will never tell you about savings.

Ontario still needs more generation capacity. On a day like this—this is a cool, damp, autumn Tuesday in Ontario—the province will need as much as 16,370 megawatts of capacity. On an hourly basis on a day like today, Ontario is exporting more than 1,200 megawatts per hour to our neighbours.

However, when it's hot, as it is in the summer or as it was unseasonably in September of this year of 2017, Ontario can draw as much as 24,000 megawatts of power, importing more than 1,000 megawatts on an hourly basis at our peak periods.

The Conservatives should have remembered this in their opposition day motion, but of course, they didn't.

The final pillar in Conservative energy policy in Ontario is the core of this opposition day motion: When all else fails for you, just blame it on the Liberals. And whenever the issue is how Conservatives manage either electricity or money, you can be certain that all else will fail.

That's just what this opposition day motion is: It's an extended rant from a party that ran power generation and transmission into the ground, that polluted our air, that saddled Ontarians with a \$21.5-billion stranded debt—by the way, you could look that up in the Auditor General's report of 2010—in a failed attempt to privatize the entire electricity system, and that still, to this day, has absolutely no plan for electricity or any other form of energy.

Speaker, this province does have a plan for electricity and other forms of energy. Realizing, when the government first took power, that there was no long-term planning for energy, in the year 2010 this province released its very first long-term energy plan. Three years later, it followed it up with the second generation of the long-term energy plan. This Thursday, October 26, 2017, Ontario will release the third in its series of long-term energy plans.

This long-term energy plan is not just a milestone. It's actually a process that says to the province, and all of our

stakeholders in energy in all of its forms, that we should go through a regular examination of what we consume; where it comes from; how we produce it, extract it or generate it, and transmit it or distribute it; and what we use it for. That regular examination of the data produced by the long-term energy plan led to the current Fair Hydro Act.

Looking at that body of data, being able to examine it on a regular basis, suggested this: Why is it that such programs as Ontario drug benefits, Ontario disability supports and other similar social programs are funded on the tax base, but social programs that relate to electricity are funded on the rate base? Why do we do that? The answer, of course, is, "Because we've always done that."

As well, in looking at the data over the span of the last seven years, and looking at it more than once, one sees that the way that Ontario manages its assets, its new power generation facilities, its transmission lines, its substations and all of the infrastructure that goes into planning and managing our electricity, and indeed, our energy system—why do we amortize it? Why do we pay for it over only a fraction of its life? Why don't we pay for it over its entire life? Because doing it that way means that the people who pay for the asset early pay too much, while people who are paying for the asset further down the line are paying too little. So, in essence, you're taxing ratepayers in the present more than you're asking ratepayers in the future to pay. Wouldn't it be more equitable if we financed the assets over their actual lifetime?

That body of data in the Ministry of Energy led to this question: If you implement these two measures, what difference would it make? The answer is, it would cut rates by about 25%. That's where the number comes from, and that's why, in the Fair Hydro Act, the proposal—and it's now implemented, so you should see this on your electricity bills—is that your electricity bills have fallen by about 25%.

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It takes you back to this opposition day motion, a desperate ploy by a rudderless party, led by a leader whose statements on energy shift with the winds while seldom having any basis in fact or in science, let alone in business.

Let's look in detail at this convoluted dog's breakfast of a resolution, and I say that with apologies to Ontario's dogs and what they eat. Opposition members sat in the estimates committee last week. They heard senior executives from Ontario Power Generation and the Independent Electricity System Operator carefully and methodically explain the foundation of a thing called rate-regulated accounting. Do you think they paid attention and absorbed it? Not a chance. That's because listening to what people who are experts in how to account for regulated rates would show that there is ample precedent in what Ontario is proposing to do, because dealing in actual reality rather than Conservative artificial reality would tell you that what the province is doing is forward-looking, prudent, logical, sensible and based on a solid foundation of real-world experiences in similar jurisdictions.

Let's talk about some of the real-world challenges that Ontario faces. We need the generations of Ontarians who will consume the electricity generation and transmission capacity that this province develops to pay for that during the full lifetime of the assets. We in Ontario need electricity consumers to pay electricity costs and not to push those costs onto taxpayers.

The way to do that is through what's called rate-regulated accounting. Ontario Power Generation, Toronto Hydro, Fortis—which is a private electricity provider—and Hydro One in this province use rate-regulated accounting. The electricity system operators in Alberta, New England, New York, Michigan, Texas, the US Midwest and the US eastern seaboard all use rate-regulated accounting.

In accounting terms, the province's financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. Canadian public sector accounting standards are silent on the use of rate-regulated accounting. Where Canadian public sector accounting standards are silent, they are explicit in saying that if the standards are silent, they encourage an entity governed by public sector accounting standards to find and consult a jurisdiction that uses other standards and to adopt accepted standards and best practices successfully in use in other jurisdictions, and that is what Ontario has proposed to do.

Let's look at the course of action followed by the Independent Electricity System Operator, or IESO, in proposing the move to rate-regulated accounting. IESO's management researched, planned and supported rate-regulated accounting. IESO's audit committee concurred in their support. IESO's board of directors studied the issue and recommended rate-regulated accounting.

KPMG, a global accounting and audit firm which audits the IESO, endorsed the use of rate-regulated accounting. The Office of the Provincial Controller concurred in its support of rate-regulated accounting. International accounting firms Ernst and Young and Deloitte have concurred with their support of rate-regulated accounting. Six of eight other independent system operators across North America use rate-regulated accounting. This means that Ontario is proposing a tried-and-tested means of describing the costs of electricity infrastructure in the province's provincial budget and in its consolidated financial statements. It means that the province has proposed a structure to describe the financing of electricity infrastructure that tells the whole truth and that spreads both costs and benefits properly among electricity consumers in the decades ahead. Ontario is proposing accounting for electricity in an accurate, fair, sustainable and transparent manner using generally accepted accounting practices and standards that have been tried, tested and successfully implemented across North America.

The Leader of the Opposition owes the people of Ontario an apology for trying to drag an independent officer of the Legislature into a partisan political debate on which he and his party are indisputably and demonstrably on the wrong side.

The province of Ontario has moved to use rate-regulated accounting for the right reasons in a proper and prudent way to enhance transparency and accountability in how electricity infrastructure costs are described.

This opposition day motion is rooted in fiction and selective interpretation. It richly deserves to be defeated and I urge my colleagues to decisively vote against it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's an honour for me to join in this very important opposition day motion on behalf of my constituents. This debate, Speaker, is very important, not only because it deals with this government's scandalous behaviour in setting up the accounting scheme for its unfair hydro plan, but I'll also speak about why their response to the Auditor General's criticism is so disturbing.

As we learned from the auditor's special report, the government rigged up its own set of accounting rules to keep the true costs of the plan off the books. That's right, Speaker: They had two sets of books. If that happened in the private sector, folks would be led out of the building in handcuffs. It's like the plot of an episode of *Law and Order*. This US-style accounting trick was designed to, in the words of the Auditor General, hide from Ontarians the real financial impacts of its electricity rate reduction—what an incredibly damning statement in this report, Speaker.

The auditor said that the government purposely broke its own accounting rules to create this deception—actually, not just its own rules but accounting standards used by the Canadian government and every provincial government, standards municipalities are required by law to follow. The auditor's assessment of this behaviour was crystal clear. She stated, "The accounting proposed by the government is wrong." And the worst part of it, Speaker: They knew it was wrong, but they went ahead for no other reason than to save their own political hides. They knew keeping the true cost on the books meant they couldn't claim this spring to have a balanced budget; forget that the Financial Accountability Officer confirmed last week that this so-called balance is a house of cards waiting to collapse. They had a promise to keep and they were hell-bent to stop at nothing to do that, so they sacrificed \$4 billion of precious public funds. That's the extra cost in interest Ontarians must pay because of the scheme to keep the borrowing costs off the government's books.

Imagine what \$4 billion could do to fix our long-term-care system, to build health care, to build infrastructure or provide rural education. We've had eHealth, the gas plants scandal, Ornge, SAMS and many, many more. But this scandal is the scandal to end all scandals: \$4 billion flushed away for political expediency.

Of course, trying to hide the true costs of their politically motivated behaviour is really standard operating procedure over there. There's a trial going on down the street right now that has its roots in this sort of bad behaviour by the Liberal Party. But there's another reason this is an important motion and why every single

member of the Legislative Assembly should support it: the disgraceful response to the Auditor General's report by this government.

Speaker, there was a time in this place when governments accepted an auditor's report with humility and agreed to implement the recommendations. But, boy, those days here are long gone. Instead of recognizing the unprecedented criticism from the auditor and pledging to change its behaviour, this government did something else: They criticized the auditor and they disputed her findings. They went to war with an independent officer of this Legislature and, I hasten to add, it's not the first time they've done that. It's shameful, Speaker, it's shameful. These actions undermine the auditor's authority, which, as a consequence, raises questions about her credibility in the mind of the public. It's a dangerous game to play just to advance the electoral agenda of the Liberal Party. It's got to stop.

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Our independent officers of the Legislature exist to provide the public with unbiased reports and recommendations that rise above the politics of this place, and I find it disgusting that the government would risk eroding the confidence and trust in those officers because they fear taking an electoral hit.

For that reason alone, I call on all members to support our motion and I look forward to hearing the apology from Premier Wynne.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I've got to say, we will be voting for this motion, because like the Conservatives, we think that the government does owe an apology; for what they've done around the entire hydro file generally, there should be an apology, but also in regard to what they've done in regard to the auditor.

Here are a couple of points that I want to make. The first one is that the government had a political problem. We understand what the issue was: The government privatized much of the OPG side of electricity and then moved to privatize over 50% of Hydro One. As a result of all of that, hydro bills went up by over 300% since these guys came to office. So people are mad. I think we all understand that. If you get a 300% or 350% increase on your hydro bill, especially if you're electrically heated, man, that's a lot of money, and people are really, really mad at what's happening with their hydro bill.

I heat with electricity out at Kamiskotia Lake because there is no natural gas. If I'm not there putting wood in the wood stove, I've got to use the electricity. I make a pretty good salary and I feel the sting of a hydro bill. In the winter, you're paying as much as \$800 to \$1,000 a month under these rates in order to heat your house if you are using electricity. I'm using wood when I'm there on the weekends. I keep the temperature at four degrees, and I was still getting hydro bills at \$500 and \$600 a month.

Imagine how people living on a fixed income, who are not lucky enough to be an MPP and have a decent salary, feel about that hydro bill. For that alone, the government

had a big political problem. They said, "Okay, we have to do something about it. Ministry of Energy and political gurus and political staff, what do we do?" So they said, "Well, we can't put the genie back in the bottle because we've gone down this road, and if we undo the privatization, as the NDP suggests, it would be an us climbing down kind of thing," and they couldn't do that. So they decided, "Well, maybe we can come up with something else." So they said, "Ah, we've got it. We're going to essentially pick up part of the hydro bill and put it on people's"—the government of Ontario is going to pay people's hydro bills; essentially, that's what we're doing.

Normally, your hydro bill comes from Hydro One. Hydro One gets the money; they pay OPG for the generation, and they get the money for transmission, distribution, whoever the distributor is, and that's that. What this government has done is provided a number of subsidies to the hydro prices, and they had to find a way to do it so it didn't show on their books. They said, "Rather than putting it on Ontario's books, we'll get OPG to finance it." And as a result, it was the most expensive method of financing—well, maybe not the most expensive, but it was one of the most expensive methods of financing they could have found. The auditor said that it boosted the cost to Ontario by—was it \$3 billion or \$4 billion a year?

Mr. Bill Walker: it was \$4 billion.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Four billion dollars a year. We're paying an addition \$4 billion a year in interest charges and everything else in order to cover what the government has done with regard to fixing its political problem.

I just want to make this point: \$4 billion a year? We all have hospitals that are overcrowded, where they're doing hallway medicine. We all have long-term care facilities where the waiting lists are through the roof, where people can't get a bed in their time of crisis in order to be able to live with security and to live with safety. They end up stuck in a hospital in an ALC unit or they end up staying at home, or wherever it might be, but they're not where they need to be, in a long-term-care bed, because there are not enough long-term-care beds. Then, in our communities, home care doesn't have the resources to provide the services for people to live at home. So just in our health care system, if we would have been able to use that \$4 billion, we could have fixed the entire problem in our health care system and had money left over, because the bill wouldn't have been anywhere near \$4 billion.

The government said, "No, no, no. We are going to throw \$120 million at buying a little bit of political peace for the next election" by adding beds in places like Timmins. We're going to get eight new beds; other communities are going to get new beds; I think 1,200 in total. The government threw \$120 million at it and said, "Problem solved."

Imagine if the government had taken the position that, "We're prepared to spend the dollars necessary to shore up our health care system," rather than trying to shore up their political problem. That's what this is all about: The government wanted to fix their political problem, so what

they did is they offed the cost onto OPG so that it would not be part of the consolidated revenue account, where it would show up on the Ontario government books because it would mean to say that their books would not be balanced.

So, yes, they owe an apology just on the policy decision alone, but they also, I think, owe an apology for how they dealt with the auditor. I agree with the Tories on this one. They're trying to attack the auditor in a veiled kind of way as a defence for their bad policy decision. The auditor is an officer of this House who was duly selected by a non-partisan process where each party had to sign off and say, "This is the person that we want." All of our officers of the Legislature are picked in that way; there must be a unanimous decision by each of the representatives on the hiring committee, one from each caucus. We all have to sign off. We have been well served by officers of the House, who have not been extremely partisan.

All of a sudden, for this government to say, "Well, you know, the auditor. Well, you know her. Oh wow. You know," veiled threats that what she's doing is wrong, I think is an attack on the process which we have adopted to hire officers of the House, but it's also an attack on good accountability and transparency. That's the second thing that I want to say.

One is that the government did all of this. It cost us \$4 billion, and that's money we now don't have to put into health care and other essential programs. Number two, the government is trying to somehow make veiled attacks at the Auditor General as a way of being able to defend themselves for a bad policy decision.

I want to come back to what the member for—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Windsor West.

Mr. Gilles Bisson:—Windsor West raised. I think it was an interesting—because I agree with her. She said, "It shouldn't just be the Liberals who apologize; the Tories should apologize as well." We are in this mess because the government decided way back, when the Tories were there, that in fact they agreed that they needed to move down the privatization.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Say sorry, Vic.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm sorry you agreed with the Green Energy Act.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm going to deal with green energy in a second. Hang on, Vic. I'll deal with green energy. One second.

The problem with the Tories is that they're good at dishing it out; they're not very good at listening to criticism about them.

My point is this: It was the Tories who decided to start privatizing in the first place. The member from Windsor—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: West.

Mr. Gilles Bisson:—West made that point, and I think it's a very important point, because it was under the Tories, when they were in office, that we started this whole path going down to privatization. She was also right when she said that Dalton McGuinty was opposed

to it and said he would never do it. Then he got elected and did it. Then Kathleen Wynne, when she ran in the last general election, said, "Oh, no, I won't privatize Hydro One," and did. So I think, a pox on both your houses. You both have done this deed that ended up raising hydro prices to the point that they are.

The other part is—and this is where I want to end, and I'll leave the rest of the time for my colleague—the Tories are happy criticizing. The Tories are happy playing negative politics, because, quite frankly, they don't have a very good record on this and they don't have a lot to say. They have to attack the Liberals, and that's their best way, and that's how they see their path to power.

I just say to people out there who are watching this debate, is that what politics in this Legislature should be about? Should it be about Liberals and Tories fighting over who did what and, "Your privatization is bad; our privatization is better," and, "I condemn you on this and condemn you on that"? You've got Kathleen Wynne being attacked on the one side, you've got Patrick Brown being attacked by the other, and the Liberal and Conservative parties fighting each other, while we are not talking about the real issues.

There is a crisis in home care; we all know it. I have people in our community, as you all have in your communities, who can't get home care when they need it. Then they end up in a hospital emergency because there's nowhere else for them to go, and they end up in alternate-level-of-care beds that are three and four times the price that it would cost us to put people in long-term care, and we don't have enough long-term-care beds.

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We are listening to Tories and Liberals argue about who is wrong and pointing fingers at each other. We see attack ads on TV: "Patrick Brown this." "Kathleen Wynne that." They keep on attacking. Well, there is another option: Vote for a party that wants to stand up for the issues that matter to you. I say that we need to be able to resolve the crisis that's developing in our long-term-care system, the problem that is happening within home care and what's happening within hospitals, and we need to start doing it soon because our population is aging, and more and more we're going to need the system, and we need to make sure that it's there for people in the future.

With that, Speaker, thank you for your time in this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to be able to stand and speak about the fair hydro plan. I think it's worthwhile to set a little bit of context around this. If we do go back to 2003, when a Liberal government took over, we had a look at the electricity system—because you will remember that there had been major blackouts and unsuccessful privatization moves by the previous government—and we said, "Okay, so what's wrong with the electricity system?" And we said, "It really needs major investment. Number one, we need to fix the transmission lines, because the transmission lines, the major

trunk transmission lines, are in bad repair. They need to be extended; they need to be repaired. We need to fix them.”

The second thing we said was, “We’re going to get rid of coal. We’re going to get rid of coal because coal is bad for the health of the people. It leads to smog days in Ontario, but that means that we need to have some alternative forms of generation other than coal, if we’re going to get rid of coal.” Again, that’s a major investment because you have to invest in new forms, alternative forms of generation.

So why are we doing all of this? We’re doing this for two reasons: (1) to protect the health of Ontarians; and (2) to make sure that your lights go on all over the province. That was where we started from. That did require expensive investments. And I think it’s useful, at this point, with each of those expensive investments in the system, to look at who borrowed the money to pay for those investments. Well, if you’re talking about transmission lines, Hydro One borrowed the money. If you’re talking about nuclear refurbishment of public generators, if you’re talking about major hydro dams, OPG, Ontario Power Generation, borrowed the money. If you’re talking about fixing local transmission lines after an ice storm, Toronto Hydro borrowed the money. If you’re talking about new transmission lines in Guelph because there’s a whole bunch of new subdivisions, Guelph Hydro borrowed the money. In fact, if you go into the private sector, Bruce Power—more down your way—was doing retrofits of nuclear generators, so Bruce Power borrowed the money. If you’re talking about private gas plants or wind or solar or whatever it is, the owner of the generation, the owner of the wires borrowed the money. That’s how it works. You need to remember that because it becomes relevant to the rest of the story.

What that meant was the price of electricity went up, and we admit that. It drove the cost of electricity up because in making those investments to make sure that the lights went on, we had to pay for all that money that had been borrowed to fix the system. The price of hydro went up, the price of electricity went up, and the Ontario public said, “It’s gone up too high. We can’t afford it anymore.” And we listened to the Ontario public. We said, “What can we do to reduce the cost of electricity for Ontario consumers, because Ontario consumers tell us that the cost of electricity is too high?” So we created the fair hydro plan.

Let’s think a little bit about how the fair hydro plan works. We know what the broad outcome of that is, that when you put together the various components, it reduces the cost of electricity for homeowners; renters, if they pay their own electricity bill; for most small businesses; and for many farms by 25%. So we came up with the fair hydro plan to reduce the cost of electricity by 25%. Cabinet actually made two fundamental decisions. It first of all looked at all of the things that are on the hydro bill and said, “Over the years, some of the things that are on the hydro bill aren’t really to do with the cost of producing and delivering electricity to your home or your

business; some of those things are social programs. So everything that has to do with electricity production should be on the rate base—that is, on your hydro bill—and everything that’s a social program should be on the tax base.

What does that mean? What are the social programs that we’re talking about?

Let’s look at some of the things that we removed from the hydro bill, where we said, “This is really a social program,” and look at the spending on those things. I’m going to give you some totals that are over five years.

We have a rural and remote rebate program, and that’s to do with the cost of transmission. If you think about where we are right now in Toronto or where I live in Guelph, the houses are close together, so for each few feet of wire, there are a lot of people. Then, Speaker, you move to your riding, where the homes are further apart, and you have to have way more wire per person, per house, per business, to deliver the electricity. Then, you go to northern Ontario, where the member from Timmins—James Bay lives, and people are often huge distances apart, so you have a huge amount of wire between houses, between businesses. We want to even that out for people, because it’s prohibitively expensive if you live in rural or remote northern Ontario. That’s really a social program. In fact, starting this year—so this is a four-year cost—that program is a \$1.9-billion investment by the taxpayers of Ontario.

Then we have the Ontario Electricity Support Program. That’s a program that’s designed to help low-income people pay their hydro bills, so again, it’s a social support program. That program over four years is \$1.15 billion.

Then we have the on-reserve First Nations Delivery Credit. Because so many of our First Nations are reliant on diesel generation, if the transmission line goes somewhere near the reserve, we do want to help them get hooked up to the nearest transmission line. That program is \$80 million over the next several years.

The Affordability Fund is something that happened last year: \$200 million to help people retrofit their homes. Low-income people often can’t afford to retrofit their home to make it more energy-efficient, if they’ve got electric heating, so that they use less energy.

Then, the 8% HST-equivalent rebate: The cost of that over five years is \$4.39 billion.

When you think about all of those programs, that’s \$7.7 billion over a four- or five-year period. We’ve switched that money from what consumers are paying on their electricity bills to the tax bill—just so people know what that means when we say we put social programs onto the tax base—a significant investment in helping average, everyday Ontarians pay their hydro bill.

The other significant decision that cabinet made was to have a look and say—right now, we’re asking people to pay back the cost of some of this new generation that we’ve created to replace coal. We’ve asked for them to pay it back over 20 years. In fact, those generators have a 30-year-or-more lifespan, depending on the sort of

generation. If it's new hydro dams, 50, 60, 70, 80 years may be the lifespan. We think it's reasonable to pay for that over 30 years instead of 20 years. We were quite upfront that, just as if you mortgage your house for 30 years instead of 20 years, the cost of borrowing will increase because you're doing it over 30 years instead of over 20, but the annual cost will be reduced even though the total cost of the interest will rise. That's a standard mortgage calculation you would get from your bank.

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We have always admitted that there will be extra borrowing costs related to that. We never tried to hide that. We said that right up front.

Let's talk about the Auditor General's report and some of the observations that the Auditor General made. The Auditor General said she accepted the government's general policy around hydro, and accepted the policy that we would be putting things on the tax base that were social programs and that we were going to reduce the cost by extending. But she didn't accept that we would be borrowing from the rate base; we should be borrowing from the tax base. The truth of the matter is, as I just told you, that it has been hydro policy for many, many years that hydro investments, hydro borrowing, goes on the rate base. That's the way it has been done for decades: Borrowing related to electricity is on the rate base. We didn't create new accounting, as the opposition keeps saying; we just carried on with the borrowing being on the rate base, which is where it has traditionally been.

The next observation that the auditor made was that you can't use rate-based accounting. I'm not going to pretend to be an accountant here, but I can follow some of the arguments about what you can and can't do. The first argument that the auditor made was that you can't use rate-based accounting because the public sector accounting standard is silent. The auditor's assertion was that where the public sector accounting standard, PSAS, is silent on an issue, it means you can't do it.

I want to quote for you, Speaker, from the public sector accounting standard. This is section PS1150.07 from the public sector accounting handbook, so from the PSAS standard. It says:

"No rule of general application can be phrased to suit all circumstances or combinations of circumstances that may arise" as you're doing your accounts.

"As a result, matters may arise that are not specifically addressed in the primary sources of GAAP." GAAP means generally accepted accounting principles.

"It is necessary to refer to other sources when the primary sources do not deal with the accounting and reporting in financial statements of transactions or events that a public sector reporting entity encounters, or when additional guidance is needed to apply a primary source to specific circumstances."

In other words, what the PSAS handbook says is, if the handbook is silent, if the handbook doesn't describe the issue, go and look at the accounting standard elsewhere that does describe the situation. In this case, where you find a description of rate-based accounting standards

is in the US GAAP, the United States generally accepted accounting principles. It has very detailed direction around how to apply GAAP. That's where you find the alternative. The actual direction in the accounting handbook is to go look elsewhere. If it's silent, go look elsewhere. That would be the first observation.

By the way, I want to point out that in fact it is true that Ontario Power Generation, OPG, uses rate-based accounting, and has for years. It has been approved by many auditors. Hydro One uses rate-based accounting, and has for years. It has been approved by many auditors. The Ontario Power Authority, which used to exist, used rate-based accounting. We actually know that.

The auditor then went on and said that the IESO, the Independent Electricity System Operator, cannot use rate-based accounting because the system operator shouldn't use rate-based accounting, and nobody else who is an electricity system operator uses rate-based accounting. But in fact, again, if you go and have a look around, there are a limited number of provinces and states which actually have something equivalent to the IESO, the Independent Electricity System Operator. The majority of them, six out of eight or six out of nine—six out of eight of the others I think is the accurate number; you can count here—do use rate-regulated accounting. So the other people who are like the IESO all around North America in fact do use rate-regulated accounting. One of those examples is actually in Canada, so it's not true to say that nobody else in Canada would do this, because Alberta does. But we also know, when we look around the US, that New York, Michigan, Texas, the Midwest and eastern seaboard electricity system operators and New England all use rate-regulated accounting for their IESO-equivalents.

So when we look at the comparators, we actually find that in fact people are using this form of accounting. So then where do you go? Well, the auditor's final assertion was that the IESO cannot use rate-regulated accounting because of the fact that there is no asset there, there is no rate-based asset there. In this particular case, the auditor has done something which is very unusual. She has given her opinion before the transaction she is auditing has actually occurred yet; that is, OPG still has to go to market to sell the asset, the rate-regulated asset. And do you know what? The market will decide, because if the market buys the asset, there's an asset.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to join in debate on the opposition motion put forward by my leader, Patrick Brown, today regarding the unfair hydro plan that's going to cost Ontarians an extra \$4 billion in unnecessary interest bills.

It was interesting to listen to the President of the Treasury Board—I'm her critic—talk about the public accounts and the Auditor General and try to gain some credibility that was lost by talking about the forms of accounting. Let me be perfectly clear to anybody who is listening to this debate today: The only people in the

world that are using this form of accounting are people like those in charge at Enron, where they hide deficits or liabilities—

Hon. David Zimmer: Say that outside. Say that outside.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: If the Minister of Indigenous Relations wants to take something outside, I'd be happy to do it, because the people of this province, for far too long, have been abused and manipulated by your government. You want to take it outside? Take it outside. I'll continue to do my work in this very place and use this microphone, because I can tell you, Speaker, \$4 billion in unnecessary interest rates—

Hon. David Zimmer: Have some guts and say it outside.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The Minister of aboriginal affairs and reconciliation will come to order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: He could learn a thing or two about reconciliation when it comes to the public accounts of this province and the unfair hydro plan.

Let me put this into perspective: We are paying more in hydro bills in this province than any other province and any other jurisdiction in North America. Why? The Green Energy Act, the smart meter tax machines, the cancelled gas plants, and now this whole challenge with the unfair hydro plan.

I have asked that tomorrow the government join with me in postponing all of the initiatives that we're doing in public accounts so we can actually get to the bottom of this. Speaker, I look forward to this government joining with us.

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I can also say to this Liberal government, they spent \$5.7 million to advertise and pat themselves on the back on this unfair hydro plan, yet they won't put \$5.5 million into opioid awareness campaigns in the province when we have a crisis on our hands. If this government truly wants to do something for the people of Ontario, they'd get out of the way and let the Progressive Conservative caucus take over because they have made a mess of the province's finances, they have made a mess of the hydro system and they are making a mess of this opioid crisis.

I will take it outside if the minister wants to have that conversation and I will do it in the public because I refuse to be bullied by this Liberal government anymore.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Interjections.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Have we calmed down in here yet? Is there going to be a brawl outside?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Watch me.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm putting my money on Lisa.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: That would be interesting. Speaker, that's why the distance between the benches is exactly two sword lengths, so we are not able to punch each other or touch each other, nor should we.

I am pleased to join the debate on behalf of the constituents in my riding of Essex. It's one that is

fundamental to their sense of what this government has done wrong and how they have mismanaged the file.

Speaker, you know me. I'm not typically a cynical person. I'm optimistic. I look for the bright side and the positive. I'm hopeful. But I don't think that this motion today is going to result in the Premier of the province offering any type of apology or anything close to it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No; no matter how it turns out.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You're not going to hear it.

I'll support it, I'll vote for it and I'll take part in the debate and try to highlight some of the issues that I have gleaned from my colleagues here from Timmins-James Bay and Windsor West.

There's no question that this government over the last 14 years has mismanaged not only the hydro file, but I would say, almost every file under their tenure. Health care is in a crisis; our corrections and community safety system is in a crisis; and our long-term-care system needs desperate attention. We could go on and on. Our infrastructure spending and the mechanisms in which we support and invest in infrastructure are wanting for some more accountability. But when it comes to hydro, I think the member from Timmins-James Bay said it quite aptly: A pox on both houses, the PCs' and the Liberal Party's.

What we're talking about today is how we got to this point. Specifically, the Progressive Conservatives would like the Premier of the province to apologize to the Auditor General of Ontario for this document, the official audit on the fair hydro plan that was conducted in October 2017. I read through it; it's complex and the accounting principles are very complex. But the one point, on page 20, that people should read is, I think, the most contentious point. This is the point the government gets aggravated around because the Auditor General points out that the Financial Accountability Office estimates that the fair hydro plan will cost the province \$45 billion over 29 years: \$5.6 billion for the provincial HST rebate and \$39.4 billion for the electricity cost refinancing. It goes on to say that this is only to be achieved if the government of today and into the future is able to hold a balanced budget for the next 29 years. If not, it will cost ratepayers between \$69 billion and \$93 billion. The \$45-billion figure is the best-case scenario.

We know that these guys aren't the greatest at balancing the budget unless, of course, there's an imminent election to be held. That's why I think we're seeing them take the actions that they have today as it relates to hydro. They are doing some crafty accounting to make it look like people are getting a deal and a break for the short term, but they're going to get hammered in the long term.

It's interesting because I heard the leader of the PC Party, Patrick Brown, state that there is no monopoly on a good idea. My goodness, Speaker, I agree with that. I think we should all put our ideas forward. I have been waiting to hear an idea, when it comes to hydro, from the PC Party. We don't see anything. We don't hear anything. I don't know what their plan is. So I have to revert back to the plan that they have on the books from the last election. That's the only point of reference that we have.

When it comes to privatizing Hydro One, today I think—we think—they're against privatization of hydro; I'm not sure. But back in the day, when we knew where the PCs were coming from—and I think that's the important thing. We might have disagreed with Tim Hudak, but my goodness, you knew where that guy was coming from. You could always count on the fact that he told you exactly where he was going to land.

They lost a bunch of seats in the last election and gave you guys a majority government, but we won't blame Tim Hudak. Maybe we'll blame a plan like this that says—this is their plan for hydro: “We suggest opening both Hydro One and OPG to investment. The first step would be to negotiate a partial sale”—remember those words, Speaker—“to Ontario's major pension funds.” Interesting plan. “These funds are the largest in Canada and have a strategic demand for long-term investments. That initial sale could later be followed by a public offering of shares to both institutional and retail investors.”

It sounds like a plan that we've seen before, one that indeed you could blame the Premier of the province for stealing verbatim, word for word. We've heard her, in this House, talk about a partial sale, and we've heard her talk about opening up a public offering of shares to both institutional and retail investors.

Speaker, the PCs will stand and pound the tables on the fact that green energy is to blame, and I would partially agree. The privatization scheme of green energy is to blame. When you contract out windmills or solar or geothermal to massive multinational conglomerates, you're paying a premium.

Instead, New Democrats have proposed a public regime, where we could invest in new green energy, renewable energy, but it would be at cost. The owners of that type of generation would be the people themselves, and municipalities and First Nations and non-profits, not massive, monolithic conglomerates that are only in it to profit.

So if you look at the escalators that privatization adds to our hydro, it is solely to blame, whether you're talking about a gas plant in Mississauga or Oakville, or you're talking about nuclear overruns on refurbishment, or you're talking about windmills in southwestern Ontario. It's not the type of turbine that's turned to produce the power; it's the ownership model and the procurement model.

They mess it up when it comes to infrastructure as well. Your P3 model has left \$8 billion on the table over the last nine years. Don't take it from me, Speaker; take it from the Auditor General, who reviewed those books too.

We hear the Liberal government admonish—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Disparage.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: —disparage and admonish the report from the Financial Accountability Officer, an officer of this Legislature who came to be because of New Democrats' need and desire, in response to the people we represent, for more accountability and transparency. We brought this in here. You did nothing to

bring this in here. It was because of New Democrats that we have this report, first and foremost. I'd like to congratulate the Financial Accountability Officer for doing such great work.

Speaker, New Democrats have a plan. I'm going to take the last minute—because we haven't heard anything in this House about what their plan is. We know what their plan is: It's their plan that they used to have. Their plan is their plan, and they stole it from them. They're the same; they're the exact same thing. So we shouldn't expect any more.

Here is what New Democrats would do:

—return Hydro One to public ownership and control, ensuring that it serves the public interest, not private interests;

—protect hydro so future governments can never again sell off hydro without the permission of the public through a referendum; and

—immediately re-establish independent, transparent, public oversight over Hydro One, something they got rid of because private industry doesn't want oversight. There's no way they're going to get into a deal with the government with that type of scrutiny—not a chance. That's why you see CEO salaries exploding to \$4 million a year. In what universe does that make any sense? None whatsoever.

1730

Speaker, we can take immediate steps. Fix the unfair delivery cost to Ontarians so they pay the same delivery cost, whether they be in urban areas or rural, and the mandatory time-of-use billing, capping the private profit margins. We won't sign contracts with private companies that have exorbitant fees, because we can do it better. We used to do it; for 100 years, we did it better, and we provided adequate, reliable hydro to our communities. We used it as a strategic investment. Imagine that, if we thought about using hydro as a strategic investment to incentivize economic development in our communities. Man, wouldn't that be a great place?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: And small business.

You know, when I came into the House this afternoon, I thought for one moment that this might be a good motion. But then, all of a sudden, I started to review things.

When I look at the Leader of the Opposition today, he has an Ottawa position, he has a Toronto position, he has a Monday position and he has a Friday position. The Leader of the Opposition now has more positions—he would make an Olympic gymnast blush, he has so many positions.

Let's talk about the issue here. I was in municipal politics for 18 years. For eight of those years, I chaired the audit committee for the city of Peterborough. One of the things that I got from my experience on the audit committee was looking at long-term assets.

Those of us in this chamber today who served in the municipal side of business know that most municipalities

issue debentures for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 years. Why municipalities do that, from an audit perspective, is because they amortize an asset over the full length of the value of that asset.

For example, if I build a new hockey arena today for my Peterborough Petes, I benefit from that new hockey arena today. I finance it over 35 years, and 35 years from now, the great fans of the Peterborough Petes will still be coming to that new hockey arena to enjoy that asset.

That's exactly the way accounting principles have always operated in the province of Ontario. You take an asset that is a value for future generations, and you amortize it so that the current generation doesn't pay the total cost up front because future generations benefit from the investment in that asset.

That's exactly what we're going at today. Anybody who was in municipal politics—my colleagues behind me know exactly how assets are financed.

When the late John Robarts built, in Pickering in 1962, the first nuclear station in the province of Ontario—when that was built through Ontario Hydro, it was amortized over the total length of that asset. In 1962, people got value from that asset. Fast-forward to 2017, and people are still getting value from that asset.

That is the generally agreed-upon accounting principle when it comes to amortizing assets over a long period of time, and everybody recognizes it.

This is just a political ploy. The guy has every position known politically in Ontario: an Ottawa position, a Toronto position, a Monday position and a Friday position. That's exactly why the biggest industry in Ontario today will be the weather-vane industry, because everybody is going to be interested in getting one.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I know the Minister of Agriculture has just finished speaking. He's going to like hearing what I have to say, because you know I'm going to quote from the Focus on Finance, Minister.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: No, no, no. You love it; I know you do.

Speaker, let me begin by giving you a preview of what's coming up in the next issue, because Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk's damning report on the Liberals' unfair hydro scheme makes one thing abundantly clear: Kathleen Wynne and her government cannot be trusted.

The key sentence in all of what we've heard, but especially from the Auditor General, is that the Liberal government deliberately wasted \$4 billion just to keep the true cost of their hydro scheme from the public. They did that through "incorrect"—that's the auditor's quote, "incorrect"—accounting methods. Speaker, they were cooking the books for politically motivated reasons. The auditor—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: He can't say that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I'd ask the member to withdraw that comment, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw, Speaker.

I'm going to quote from the auditor. They "hide from Ontarians the real financial impact of its electricity rate reduction." That is, in a nutshell, what we're talking about. We're not talking about the kind of accounting for the \$43 billion or \$44 billion; we're talking about the \$4 billion just to keep the true cost off the books. The auditor couldn't have been more blunt in her condemnation. She said, "The accounting proposed by the government is wrong and if used would make the province's budgets and future consolidated financial statements unreliable."

Imagine, Speaker, knowing that you're about to do something that will make anything you ever say financially unreliable, from this point forward. You won't have a starting point in your books. The books have to balance. You need to know each year that the auditor comes in and says, "Yes, your books are balanced. You can go forward now. Everybody understands we're at a level playing field." Can you imagine that she's saying that your financial statements are unreliable? That's shocking. She also said, "In essence, the government is making up its own accounting rules." Again, that's stunning.

Make no mistake, Speaker, that this hydro scheme is an election ploy. We've seen hydro rates skyrocket between 300% and 400% to the highest across Canada. If the Wynne Liberals are re-elected, rates will only continue to soar, and, quite frankly, northerners will bear the brunt of that.

This report is just the latest piece of evidence proving that the Premier and her ministers are deliberately not being honest with Ontarians about the province's fiscal numbers or the numbers on hydro bills. In fact, that \$4 billion—they co-opted crown agencies to be complicit in this cynical multi-billion-dollar scheme.

The auditor went so far as to tell us about some of the members across there. She said, "Cabinet was regularly briefed" and provided details. Again, the Premier, the finance minister, the energy minister, the Minister of Agriculture who just spoke, all these ministers who are just sitting here right now: They knew in advance that families would be on the hook for an extra \$4 billion just so they can hide what the true cost of their scheme is. That, we find offensive.

The auditor, on page 6 of her report, said, and I'm quoting again—and it's important that we repeat this: "The government's intention ... was to avoid affecting its fiscal plan ... to avoid showing a deficit." They wanted to show no increase in the provincial debt.

Again, why is all this important? Because we're coming into an election, the government continues to say they have balanced the budget when indeed the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General both tell us that they have not balanced the budget. So putting their hydro scheme on the books would further increase not only our annual deficit but the annual debt. The auditor says that they're already off the deficit number by about \$1.5 billion and off the debt number by about \$12 billion. Can you imagine having to add another \$40

billion in costs? It will just throw the deficit and our debt off even greater. That's why they've gone to great pains. They went across the street to OPG and had them borrow the money and put it on their books so it doesn't show up and they can try to boast a balanced budget because the real cost of money they're spending is not going to show up on the budget. Therefore, she has continued to say that the purpose was to avoid telling the truth.

Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this oppo day motion today.

Years ago, C.D. Howe, who was the financial guru of the federal government in days gone by, had a statement that said, "What's a million?" Well, in the case of this government, it's a very dated statement because for them, it's "What's a billion? What's \$4 billion? What is \$90 billion?" The reason I say \$90 billion is that the Financial Accountability Officer has actually said that this hydro scheme, the so-called fair hydro plan of this government, could cost as much as \$90 billion-plus. We know that it is, at a very minimum, \$40 billion; a minimum of \$40 billion and a maximum of over \$90 billion.

1740

What we found out from the auditor last week, in what I can tell you is the most scathing report I have ever seen about this government—and when you talk about this government and the reports on its performance and its accountability and its openness and its transparency, to say that this report is the most scathing means that there have to be an awful lot of scathing reports that we've seen in the last 14 years.

The thing that is the most scary about this one is that, and my colleague from Nipissing and our finance critic has articulated it very well—they basically said, "We have to figure out a way to keep this off the books." Do you know what they did, Speaker? They actually paid outside consultants \$2 million to come up with a flow chart that would somehow hide the true cost of this plan from the ratepayers and the people of Ontario—\$2 million to come up with a plan. That's not the cost of the plan; just, "Here's \$2 million. Give us a way that we can prevent the people from knowing the actual facts."

And then, when the auditor requests emails to try to find out what actually went on, they paid lawyers half a million dollars to try to block those emails and slow the flow. We know how well that worked for the previous Liberal administration, and now they're trying to block emails from the Auditor General.

But the numbers speak for themselves. They are willing to spend—as the auditor has said; it's been repeated here over and over today—an extra \$4 billion to keep this off the consolidated balance sheet, because, as my colleague said, they do not want anybody to say next year, "You guys can't balance the books." They're going out there and saying, "Hey, we're the Liberals. We're good money managers." Nobody is really foolish enough to believe that, but these are the spin masters. These are

the masters of spin. We have never seen a political machine like it and they're going to do their very best next year to convince people that they're good managers.

They've taken the debt from about \$125 billion, which is what it was when they took office in 2003—we will see debt by the time the election rolls around next year of more like \$330 billion in the province of Ontario. Yes, they're great money managers, all right. And now they want to hide that cost from the consolidated balance sheet. They are willing to saddle the people of Ontario, the ratepayers of Ontario, you and I and all of those people out there who pay hydro bills, with an extra \$4 billion in costs.

What they did, Speaker, is that instead of borrowing the money through what most people would expect, the government itself, they co-opted a crown corporation. They forced OPG, Ontario Power Generation, to be the borrower. Ontario Power Generation borrowed the money, but it's like you and I, Speaker—well, I don't know, but it's like two different people. I won't bring us into it. One has a high credit rating and one has a lower credit rating. The high credit rating can borrow money at a lower interest rate—the one with the higher credit rating. Governments have high credit ratings, even this one, even though the ratings have dropped. It has a higher credit rating than OPG, yet they forced OPG to borrow the money and they're going to force the people to pay it back on their hydro bills. That's going to amount to an extra \$4 billion.

What I don't understand is how these people can sleep at night. If you are the architect of a scheme that means that the people of Ontario, who work hard, pay their bills, raise their families and want a better life for their children—if you're the entity, if you're the government that says, "We're just going to hit you with another \$4 billion, because we've got to make ourselves look good," you have to ask yourself, how can you, in good conscience, behave that way when you are risking the financial health of the people of Ontario?

As C.D. Howe said, "What's a million?" What's \$4 billion? They laugh over there, and they think, "Hey, we've come up with something great. We paid \$2 million to come up with a scheme." They just don't care, because the only thing that matters to the folks over there is June 7, 2018, and, "Can we hoodwink the people one more time? Can we get by one more election? And then we'll see what happens in Ontario."

It is unconscionable, and I hope the people of Ontario pay them back with a ticket out the door next June.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Mr. Bill Walker: Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Your favourite; one of your favourites. Thank you so much.

I'm going to start off by saying that for a government that likes to preach about accountability and transparency, it's interesting that we actually have to have a special report from the Auditor General. A legislative officer of this assembly has to come out with a special report.

Why would they not have used the Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards if there was nothing that they were trying to hide? Why wouldn't they have used those public accounting standards that we have used for 100 years?

I'm going to quote from here: "When governments pass legislation to make their own accounting rules that serve to obfuscate the impact of their financial decisions, their financial statements become unreliable.... When organizational structures and transactions are designed to remove transparency and accountability, and unnecessarily cost Ontarians billions of dollars, the responsibility of an Auditor General is to apprise the Legislature and the public in accordance with the Auditor General's mandate." I commend her for bringing this forward and making sure the people of Ontario do know.

The ag minister, when he spoke in here just a little while ago, suggested that if he wanted to build a hockey rink in Peterborough, he would just debenture this. This is a little different. I'm wondering if the great people of Peterborough would agree that he should overspend by \$4 billion. He can try to smooth that with words however he wants, but at the end of the day, the reality is that Ontarians need to know: \$4 billion extra in interest because they played a shell game. They moved the debt off their books onto OPG's books so that they could try to stand in this Legislature—ironically, just in an election year—and say, "We balanced our books." People in Ontario are much too smart for that.

Here are words again used by the Auditor General: complex financing system.

Premier Wynne and the Liberal government have duped Ontarians up to \$39.4 billion over 30 years, and \$4 billion in unnecessary interest—\$4 billion that won't go to long-term-care facilities. In this House earlier today, we found out that there's the potential of 14 nursing homes and 1,800 seniors being at risk, but that money will not be going to them, because this government chose to hide money on other books that they didn't have to stand in front of. At the end of the day, they are going to spend \$21 billion, I believe it is, on just paying back this debt.

We have people who are suffering from mental health; we have hospitals that are challenged; and they are going to close 600 schools. But miraculously, they found a way to borrow \$25 billion, which is going to cost us anywhere between \$43 billion and \$93 billion to pay back, on the backs of those pages in front of you, for generations to come, Mr. Speaker, all because they want to save their skin. They want to go into an election being able to say that.

We know that for the next two decades, there are going to be higher costs. This is a short-term solution that they're planning. It's a scheme that we know they have

played out, and they, again, have deliberately done this. They have gone out of their way to design a complex financial system and move money from their books to OPG's books. They knew full well, because senior officers in the government pointed it out to them: This is going to cost more, to borrow money through OPG, than it would through their own borrowing devices—\$4 billion. I can't say it enough and as many times.

Long-term care is suffering; mental health is suffering; 600 schools are going to be closed. Yet they continue to stand there and try to spin words to say, "This is all good. This is all wonderful. Other countries do it. Other places do it."

We don't care, Mr. Speaker. We want to know, for Ontarians who work hard every day to pay their bills, that we're actually getting value for money on every single thing the government does.

At this point in time, I ask the government: How, after 14 years of mismanagement, incompetence, scandal and billions of dollars wasted on gas plants, on Ornge and on eHealth, are we supposed to stand here and accept that they know better than the Auditor General—an independent officer of this House who brought out a special, damning, scathing report that has suggested that she is very, very concerned?

As my colleague our finance critic from Nipissing, Vic Fedeli, has pointed out in here, there are a lot of things going on. The estimated impact of this supposed fair hydro plan—although it's an unfair hydro plan—is \$45 billion over 29 years. It could be as high as \$69 billion to \$93 billion. And it's a double hit, because if you think of \$69 billion or \$93 billion and what it could do for our institutions, what it could do for our most vulnerable, what it could do for people on social and community services, what it would do for our infrastructure, it's unfathomable.

I can't believe that the party opposite would stand there and try to make this sound like, "Everything is good. Just trust us." There is an election coming very soon. People are going to very quickly make a decision. Are they going to believe the government that has tripled our debt and put it on the backs of our youth, our next generation, our leaders, or are they going to believe the Auditor General, who said, "You are using complex accounting systems to be able to hide that debt, to be able to say that you did"?

Let's not forget, when we're talking taxes and promises: "We will not raise taxes. We will not bring in a health care tax." It goes back that far, Mr. Speaker, and they continue to do the same thing here. They've moved money for their own personal gain so they can try to get re-elected, forgetting all about the needs of Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, it's wrong. It is an unfair plan and we cannot support it on this side. I hope they will vote for our motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Brown has moved opposition day number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”
In my opinion, the nays have it.
Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.
The division bells rang from 1752 to 1802.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Brown, Patrick
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Fedeli, Victor
Gélinas, France
Hardeman, Ernie

Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
Martow, Gila
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Natyshak, Taras
Pettapiece, Randy

Romano, Ross
Scott, Laurie
Tabuns, Peter
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those opposed to the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe

Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill

McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sousa, Charles
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 27; the nays are 51.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Welland has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Labour. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and in this particular case the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour may reply for up to minutes.

I now turn it over to the member from Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's always an honour to rise to talk about workers in this province.

I want to spend a couple of minutes giving you some background about the GE plant in Peterborough.

Between 1945 and 2000, those workers handled over 3,000 highly toxic substances. They played a significant role in an epidemic of work-related illnesses of employees and retirees. The majority of occupational disease claims have been denied by WSIB for more than 20 years, when workers finally became aware that many of their cancers were caused by the toxic substances that they had to use in their workplace.

Unifor sponsored a report put together by an advisory committee, released in 2017.

Safety measures only started to be implemented around 2000.

The plant workers built everything from appliances to diesel locomotive engines and fuel cells for nuclear reactors and, we know, were exposed to toxic chemicals, including at least 40 known or suspected to cause cancer, at levels hundreds of times higher than what is now considered safe. Workers routinely handled toxic substances with their bare hands, were offered little in the way of protective gear—and since then, they paid the price. They were also paid by piecework. They didn't even have a lunchroom in this particular plant. They ate their sandwich with one hand while they were dealing with toxic substances on whatever machine they were working on.

The first-hand recollections are supported by a database of labour ministry inspection reports, joint health and safety committee minutes, company memos, industrial hygiene literature and other documents. It confirms and catalogues the workers' daily exposure to highly toxic and carcinogenic chemicals in every area of the plant. According to the study, about 500 pounds of asbestos were used daily without respiratory protection or proper exhaust ventilation, despite the company's reports showing that managers knew of the harmful effects of the substance as early as the 1920s and the 1930s.

1810

I just want to do an update about what's happened this year. From March 28 to 30, the minister met with the Peterborough workers. OHCOW subsequently had 60 to 70 new cases that required assessments and medical reports, in addition to 250 cases that are currently sitting at WSIB to be reviewed.

The government commitments from information meetings: It was communicated that appropriate resources would be available to deal with files on a timely basis; a transparent process involving workers' reps; an expeditious process for reviewing and resolving claims; substantial improvement of resources for OHCOW clinics; and a possible presumptive entitlement position for GE workers.

In June 2017, OHCOW submitted a business plan to the appropriate ministry to say that they needed \$2 million to hire more staff to review these 70 cases in a timely way.

In September, the province announced WSIB would reopen 250 of the cases involving former workers at GE—those who have already had assessments done. While this was positive and welcomed, there are still no resources available for those still in need of assessments as well as any new workers who are expected to come forward.

So here lies the problem: I asked the minister a question; the minister didn't give the workers, their representatives or their families the answers that they need. What we need to know is, who is the review panel? Who is on the panel and what are they reviewing? Who is actually advocating for these people? Do they have anybody with any expertise advocating? Are they going to wait for new medical evidence before they actually deny? To date, they have reviewed 16 cases; they've approved six and they've denied 10 for the second time.

There's no mention of the funding for OHCOW, which was promised. Two million dollars was asked for; the ministry cut it to \$1 million. Now it's months later and they haven't seen a dime. OHCOW has said, "We don't have the people or resources to do this." So you're putting workers at a disadvantage right off the hop if you're saying to them, "Well, just call into our 1-800 line and we'll look after you," when they don't even have anybody representing them and nobody knows they've even made a claim. Their union doesn't know they've made a claim, and OHCOW doesn't know, perhaps, that they've made a claim. So those people are disadvantaged right off the hop.

What the workers want to know is, are you going to provide money to OHCOW to make sure these people are properly represented? Are you going to deal with the systemic issues that were brought forward by Maryth Yachnin and the IAVGO team regarding the no-evidence report?

I'm down to my eight minutes, Speaker, so hopefully the parliamentary assistant will be able to answer some of those questions and provide some reassurance to the workers and their families about this very important issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Now the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, has up to five minutes to respond.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm just here today to deal with a very, very difficult life that some workers have had to endure. This goes back, as the member says, to 1945. Beside me is the Minister of Agriculture, Jeff Leal, who represents Peterborough. As a city councillor and as an MPP, he's been meeting with families living this very, very difficult situation right on the streets of Peterborough. Friends and family, relatives—in fact, his own father, Doug Leal, worked at the plant. So he has seen first-hand in his own family what happened. After 40 years of working at the plant, Doug Leal retired in July 1982. He died in October 1983 of cancer.

I think that's why this is something that has to be dealt with in a very comprehensive, hard-nosed way, because

there is obviously a situation that needs to be corrected. We now have put a new emphasis on this and the Minister of Labour himself has gone to Peterborough and talked to the families. It is very imperative that we deal with these claims and the WSIB starts to, in many ways, pay serious attention to these pleas by the workers—and they are pleas that in some cases were never believed.

I know the member—I've talked to him in the past about it. He recalls, "Can you imagine? You could load up your pickup truck at the back of the plant with asbestos, free." You could take home the asbestos, not even understanding that these men—mostly men and some women—who worked in the plant would have to work in this five, six days a week, and we know the deadly effect. That's why it's imperative that our government move deliberately and carefully in ensuring that these families of GE workers get justice.

I want to say that there are so many examples of this type of toxic atmosphere which has been proven deadly all over the world. It's time that we really did something in a concrete way. That's why the WSIB announced that they have established a dedicated review team, a focused review team, and they're going to reopen and review more than 250 cases. We know that as of last week, 16 cases have been reviewed and 10 are now approved. By the way, there's another 30 new cases that have come forward. The WSIB is using new scientific information to try to ensure that they deal with these in a very pragmatic way and in a very transparent way.

I know it is a priority of the Minister of Labour, Kevin Flynn, to treat occupational diseases with the same seriousness and importance as physical injuries. In the past, we haven't done that, really, as much as we should; there's no doubt about it. It's about time we did, and I support the move to more aggressive action on this front of occupational diseases, because they are a reality.

We've got to do whatever we can resource-wise and support-wise. Certainly the minister has been very forceful in saying that this situation needs to be corrected. He's made it very much his mandate to ensure this is done thoroughly, with compassion and with support. As the member said, you need money and you need support, because these men, women and families have gone through hell because of no fault of their own—just because they wanted to work.

That's why our government is taking this with a great deal of seriousness. There's no way that this type of situation should jeopardize these hard-working people twice—to have worked their whole life, gotten a disease at the same time, and then to not be given justice in terms of their claim.

It's about time we did something to correct this once and for all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank both members.

There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1818.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Samia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC) Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	York–Simcoe Halton	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Vacant	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Michael Mantha
Mike Colle, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Cheri DiNovo, Michael Harris
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Michael Mantha, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Mike Colle, Han Dong
Victor Fedeli, Ann Hoggarth
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Granville Anderson
Granville Anderson, Yvan Baker
Grant Crack, John Fraser
Lisa Gretzky, Julia Munro
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Granville Anderson, Lorenzo Berardinetti
James J. Bradley, Wayne Gates
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Amrit Mangat, Jim McDonell
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Ross Romano, Monique Taylor
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Grant Crack, Jennifer K. French
Jack MacLaren, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Lorne Coe, Bob Delaney
Vic Dhillon, Joe Dickson
Harinder Malhi, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Peter Tabuns
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley